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THE POWER
OF THE WILL

H. R. SHARMAN

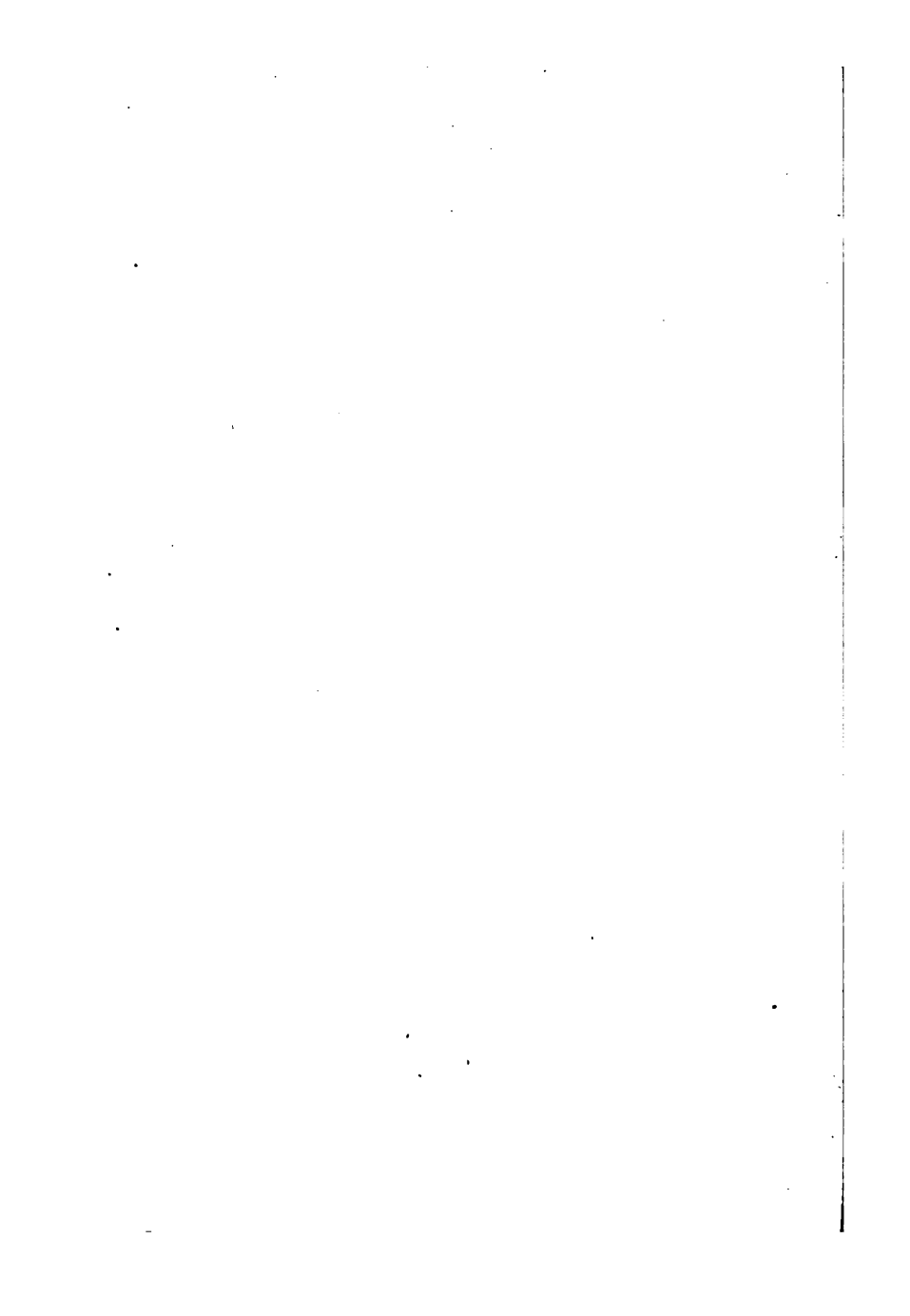
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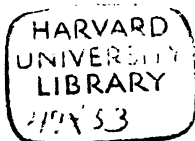
SUCCESS

THE
POWER OF THE WILL
OR
SUCCESS

BY
H. RISBOROUGH SHARMAN

BOSTON
ROBERTS BROTHERS
1894

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INTRODUCTION.

WITHOUT ignoring, or in any sense undervaluing, the numerous and interesting philosophical aspects of the subject now before us, I have dealt with the "will" in this book, from a purely practical point of view, as directly related to the everyday life of "all sorts and conditions of men." I have endeavored to show that, by cultivating the "will," strengthening it by constant and careful exercise, a man may attain the highest success in life that is possible to his natural ability, while, by neglecting to cultivate it, he will certainly fail to succeed at all. And I have also shown that the extent of the success or the failure is, in a very large degree, proportionate to the extent of such cultivation or neglect. It is true that a man may meet with what is called a "stroke of luck;" but it will surely be found that "luck," as a rule, shows a marked preference for those who have duly cultured and restrained their mental and moral faculties.

I have given utterance to most of the ideas that are scattered through these pages in addresses to working men, and in contributions to various journals. My views gradually took a more connected form, and then they constituted the material of a lecture, which has been so well received by large audiences, that I have been led to put the substance of the lecture into the present form, with the hope that it may be useful to the public at large, and suggest profitable trains of thought and principles of action for the guidance of those who are seeking to improve their qualifications for the great conflict of life. I am anxious to point out what I believe to be the open secret of all true and permanent life-success.

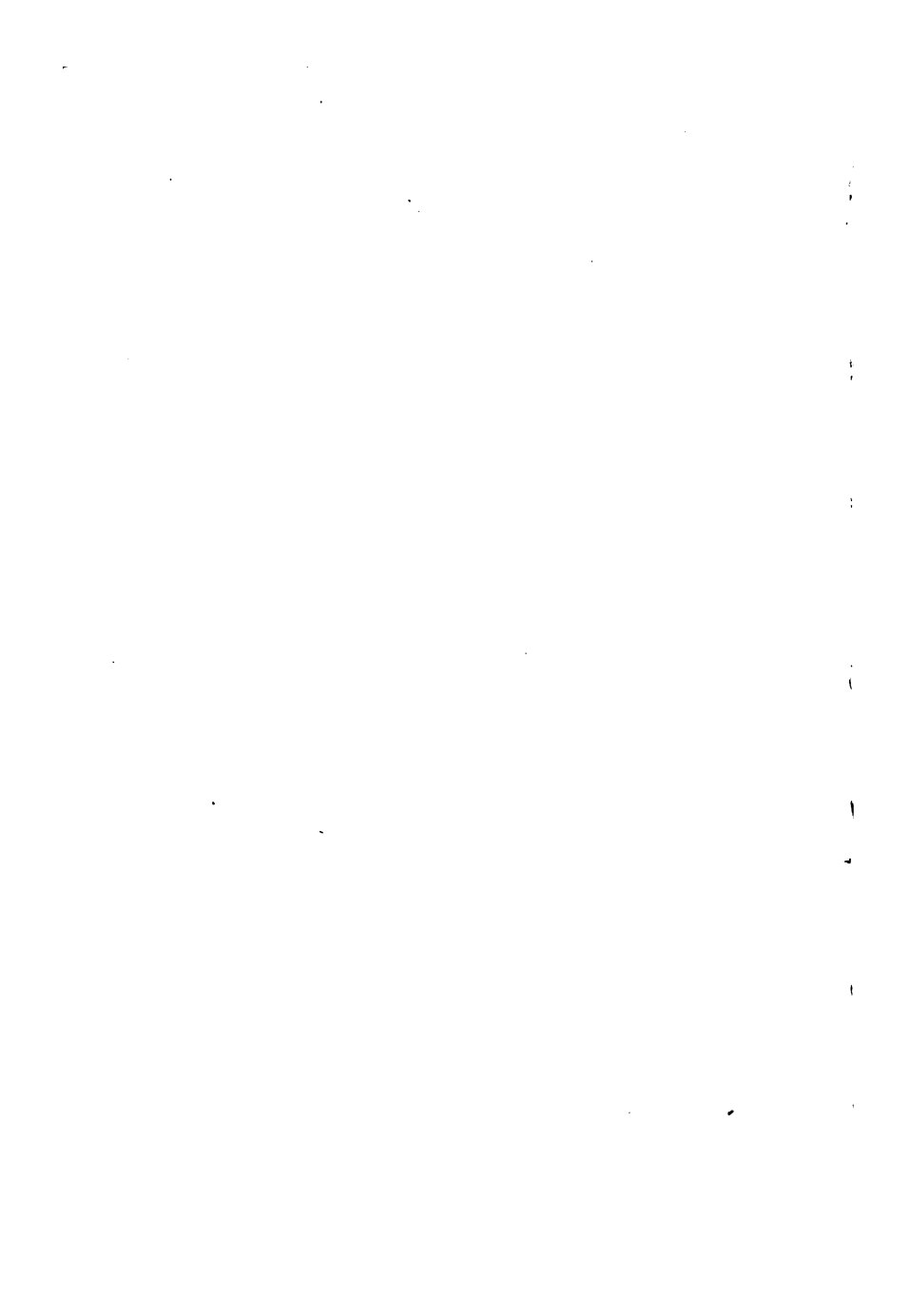
H. R. SHARMAN.

4, AVE MARIA LANE, LONDON, E. C.

1894.

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THE POWER OF THE WILL.

CHAPTER I.

THE WILL-POWER IN THE BATTLE OF LIFE.

THE will is, in a sense, free, and this freedom of the will is a Divine trust which involves personal responsibility for the due exercise and development of the power intrusted. Of the man with ten talents greater things will be expected, no doubt, than of the man with a single talent, but the latter is responsible for *his* trust as truly as the former for *his*, and the comparative smallness of his trust can afford him no excuse whatever for "burying it in a napkin," and failing to increase and strengthen it, as a power for service, by careful and constant cultivation. The will, in relation to the life, may be compared at once to the rudder and to the steam-engine of a vessel, on the combined and related action of which it depends entirely for the direction of its course and the vigor of its movement. A man's *fate* is in his own hands to a far larger extent than he is wont to recognize ; and the object of this book is to con-

vince men of that fact, and to induce them, according to the figure we have suggested, to grasp the rudder and hold the vessel firmly and steadily on its course during the voyage of life instead of allowing it to drift hither and thither at the caprice of every wind and wave of opposition and difficulty that it may have to encounter.

It is impossible to look into the conditions under which the battle of life is being fought without perceiving how much really depends upon the extent to which the will-power is cultivated, strengthened, and made operative in right directions. One man does his best to exercise and develop his will-power, and by long-continued, steady, and intelligent perseverance he rises from the position of apprentice to become the head of the firm ; from being a poor errand boy to become a wealthy capitalist ; from the log cabin to sit in the presidential chair of a great nation ; from the depths of the coal-mine to take a seat in the House of Commons ; from the navy to the millionaire contractor, whose son may even get a peerage. One man possesses, or by long and persevering cultivation acquires, the *will-power* which enables him to make satisfactory progress in those paths that lead to the object on which his ambition is fixed. Gradually he is able to remove and overcome most, if not all, these impediments which prevent his progress, or, at any rate, impede it. The other man simply drifts down the stream of life as a log floats down a river, with little or no

control over the direction that he takes. He comes into violent collision with many obstacles which the other man has been able to avoid, and he is often injured by accidents which the other man has been able, more or less, effectually to escape.

It will be observed that we speak of *will-power*. There must be the "power" as well as the "will." The two go together, and each is useless by itself. The man who has the "power" without the "will" is as badly equipped for the conflict of life as he who has the "will" without the "power." Both of these can and should be cultivated and developed. By the exercise of the will you may expand its power, and by strengthening the power you may enlarge the service of the will. The "will," as we have said, may be likened to the "rudder," and the "power" may be likened to the steam-engine of the vessel. The engine is of no use; it is rather a source of danger than otherwise without the rudder, and the rudder is of no use without the force that is necessary to carry the vessel in the desired direction. It is as needful to attend to the coal-bunkers as it is to obey the laws of navigation. It is of no use to merely know in what direction you wish to go if you have not the *power* of making the vessel go in that direction.

So in the battle of life, the man that exercises his will makes it a stronger and more effective force in proportion to the extent to which such exercise is intelligently and perseveringly maintained, while the

man who is content to float down the stream of life with little exercise of his will in attempts to direct his course, will become less and less able to exercise it as emergencies arise. Just as it is with the athlete. He knows full well that his success depends upon his training, and training becomes to him a duty, of which he never fails to recognize the importance. Whatever, therefore, will strengthen his frame for the contest he seeks after, and whatever tends to make his limbs and muscles flaccid and weak he will scrupulously avoid. That is if he really *means* to win.

To enter, then, with intelligence and success on the great conflict of life, it is needful that we should begin at the beginning, and ask, What are we? How did we become what we are? How may we become what we desire to be? and what are the principal helps to our success, and what are the hindrances placed in our way?

CHAPTER II.

WHAT ARE WE ?

BEFORE proceeding any further in this inquiry, it is very desirable that we should undertake the task of an earnest, honest, searching, and thorough self-examination, in order that we may get an accurate notion of what is, so to speak, our *present power* for fighting the battle of life. Such an examination, if it is to be of any real use to us, must not only be thorough and impartial whenever it is undertaken, but it must be frequently and carefully repeated. We shall be constantly discovering points of weakness that should be attended to, and perhaps, also, hopeful things that are capable of profitable development, of the existence of which we had previously little or no conception. It will pay us well to examine our armor and our weapons again and again as the conflict of life progresses.

Self-conquest is not an easy or a pleasant task, but it must be undertaken in downright earnest ; and there is a rich reward for those who do overcome, which is exactly proportioned to the extent in which they overcome.

Of course there is as much diversity between what it is *possible* for different individuals to accom-

plish, even if they do their very best, as there is between what they *actually do* accomplish. But let every man do his best ; angels can do no more. It would be a profitable reflection if men would calmly consider how far it is their own fault that they are not able to do more than they now feel they can do. It is but deluding and hindering ourselves to talk of "genius" and "luck" and "fate" and destiny. *Work*—steady, intelligent, and persevering work—is the real secret of success in life. We must not allow ourselves to be discouraged by passing failures ; we must "try, try again."

When we have given this point due consideration, or rather, while we are doing so, we come to the next point.

CHAPTER III.

HOW DID WE BECOME WHAT WE ARE ? — HEREDITY
AND ENVIRONMENT.

BEING created with certain endowments and dispositions, we became what we are to-day by the combined influences of (*a*) our "heredity," and (*b*) our "surroundings," or what is called "environment," as these affect created beings.

Under "heredity" we group all those tendencies and powers, physical, mental, and moral, which we are said to inherit from our parents or even from more remote progenitors. The subject of heredity is too large and too complex for adequate treatment in this work. We may, however, certainly affirm that the advantages to be derived from the cultivation of the will-power are not restricted to the individuals themselves who engage in that work, but extend to others, to their children, — indeed, we may say, to the whole community, of which they are constituent elements ; and from the community they must even influence the nations, and through the nations the world of all the ages.

Every living thing is capable of reproducing its own kind. The will is, in a sense, free, and may be

thought of as a living thing, but its exercise is modified by environment as well as by hereditary tendencies. These influences and tendencies, if they are good, may be developed, and if they are evil, they may be counteracted and defeated. In some of the lower forms of life a division takes place, and the two parts become separately and independently existent and reproductive. But both parts are similar, — the new is the precise counterpart of the old ; and when the new ones in their turn divide, the process of division is precisely the same, and so is the result. The colt reproduces the inherited movements of its highly-trained parents. It is a fact that this is equally traceable in human life, though the wisest philosophers do not pretend to explain *how* it is that "like always breeds like." The fact that these peculiarities — features, strength, weakness, temper, and constitutional tendencies — are transmitted from sire to son, with an occasional reversion from the grandparents or collateral branches of the family, is indisputable. In this essay, we are dealing with practical results and applying them to daily life, and must therefore leave the philosophical branches of the subject in abler hands.

A little calm reflection on this matter should give every reasonable man a deep sense of the importance of cultivating his will-power so as to develop the good and to counteract the bad that he may have inherited ; and it should show us also our responsibility for making the best of such talents as

may have been inherited or acquired, both for the sake of ourselves as individuals, and for the sake of the community in the midst of which we dwell. It should show us, moreover, the serious results which may ensue from the good or bad influence of our personal character and conduct upon our families and friends; upon those whom we may meet in business or in society; upon those who read what we may write, or hear what we may speak. Many a man has fallen into evil habits, and sunk to the lowest depths of misery and degradation, owing to his not having fought and conquered the evil tendencies which he had inherited from his progenitors, while his own brother, with the same family history, similar environment, and similar inherited propensities, has managed, by long and patient perseverance, to reduce their power over him to a minimum by a careful cultivation of the will-power, by practising a stern self-denial, and by steadily cultivating the good in order to counteract the bad.

The self-examination we have spoken of will reveal many hitherto unnoticed points in this connection; and our clear duty is to surround ourselves, as far as possible, with every influence which can strengthen the good qualities that we have inherited or have acquired, and as far as we possibly can, entirely extinguish the evil tendencies due to heredity or environment. Even our "will-power" itself or the lack of it, as the case may be, is often largely due to our ancestors, and the man who makes it the

means of his success in life has often to thank his parents or his more remote progenitors rather than any virtuous resolution and perseverance on his own part. The healthy son of a man who fought his way from the lowest steps in the ladder to the point at which he aimed is often found to possess the same firmness of will, and the same resolute determination to overcome every hindrance that he may find in his way, that was characteristic of his parent. It is, however, sometimes otherwise. There have been cases in which a rough but successful father, dreading that his son should have such a hard lot in life as he has had himself, with the intention to serve him, really injures him seriously, by having him "brought up as a gentleman," as he calls it, by which he means, free from the need to work for his living. It would be right enough if he meant that his training should fit him for the superior position which he is able, so far as money goes, to occupy.

CHAPTER IV.

ENVIRONMENT, WILL-POWER, AND THE CHILDREN.

WHATEVER there is in our natural character that is not due to the "heredity," of which we have just been speaking, may be set down to the influence of what is called "our environment," by which we are to understand every kind of influence, material and moral, that has been brought to bear upon us from the cradle until now. Many of our greatest men have traced the earliest influences for good, in the formation of their characters, to the loving care of a tender mother. She commenced that training which was continued by the exercise of their own will-power, and made them what they afterwards became. She first coaxed them into the prompt obedience of what was right and the careful avoidance of what was wrong. She encouraged them to try again after each failure; she guided their tottering steps; she lovingly raised them up after every fall with words of sympathy and caution, and with such wealth of affection as only a loving mother can display. She never wearied in watching and praying over them in times of sickness and accident. In such ways mothers come to exert a powerful, permanent, and

predominating influence over the formation of early characters and dispositions. It is at the mother's knee that the foundations of future moral greatness are securely laid. The seed which she sows, for good or for evil, germinates, expands, and multiplies, so long as the life which she has brought into being continues to exist. We cannot begin too early to train the children in the way that they should go by inculcating and requiring prompt and cheerful obedience, by teaching them how much must depend upon themselves, and can only be done by themselves, and thus securing their hearty personal co-operation in the work of self-culture.

I once had a large and productive garden, but the weeds seemed ineradicable. Do what I would they flourished abundantly, not only in the flower-beds, for they even invaded the paths. It was a new house built on meadow land. An old man who lived opposite, in a very unpretending cottage, had also a large garden, and I noticed, with curiosity and interest, that his place seemed always free from weeds, and in this was a marked contrast to mine. One day I asked him what his little secret was. "I don't know as I have any secret," he said, "except that I don't encourage them when they are *young*."

No secret! *That* is a grand secret that everyone ought to reflect upon and put into practice early, earnestly, and constantly. Evil habits, like weeds, are not to be "encouraged when young," or else they will surely gain the mastery over us, or, at

least will gain such a hold on us as will render our task increasingly difficult in proportion to the extent of our delay in commencing it.

It is not the severity, but the absolute certainty, of punishment that deters from evil. Those fond but foolish parents who, from mistaken affection, say of the offending child, "We let him off *this* time," as the foolish phrase goes, are only "making a rod for their own backs," — sowing the seeds of future sorrow; disposing the little one to manifest a similar yielding weakness whenever temptation may present itself.

I can imagine some fond parent who may read these lines saying that it is impossible to get the little ones to *co-operate* in this task, because they cannot be made even to comprehend the situation.

I will illustrate what I mean by taking a case that has actually occurred in my own experience. A little boy of considerable intelligence had been well trained, but almost exclusively by his mother, as he had not quite reached his fourth birthday. He had inherited a considerable amount of will-power from his parents, and exhibited it in a variety of those awkward and unpleasing ways with which those who have to do with healthy boys are familiar. The common idea in such cases is to "whip the wickedness out of him." But this is a most serious, and may even be a fatal, mistake. You do not want to take the decision of character out of him. It is a most valuable force, and it only wants putting into

wise restraints and directing into proper channels. We call it "firmness" or "decision of character" when a person is doing *what* we think right, and doing it in the *way* we think right ; but when we do not happen to approve of what is done, we are apt to call it "obstinacy," or, perhaps, "pigheadedness." In fact, no censure then seems to be too severe. There is a valuable latent *force* in this will-power, and the thing to be desired is its training in right ways and uses. It is important to get the child himself to see that. There is an important part of this work of training that he must do for himself and even by himself, and no one, not even the most affectionate and indulgent parent, can possibly do the work altogether *for* him. One day this boy was going to visit his grandfather, but his violence and mischievousness were such that day that it seemed as if his mother would be obliged to punish him by leaving him at home, even at the expense of such a scene as the mothers of high-spirited boys can readily imagine. But instead of punishing him on that occasion, she took him on her knee, and explained to him in the simplest possible language, so as to make him fully understand, that this "Mr. Temper" that was inside him was always making him want to be disobedient, and now wanted to make him naughty that day, so that he might not go to Grandpa's, and have nice fruit and games and enjoy himself. She persuaded him to stamp on Mr. Temper, and not let him prevent this visit to his

grandfather. These high-spirited boys have an innate love of conflict ; and by tact and explanations suited to their childish comprehension, that feeling can be made available in teaching them to overcome their evil propensities, especially if you can make them see what they lose and what they suffer if they do not overcome them. The little hero in this case stamped his foot, and said "Mr. Temper" should not have his way, and he would be good so that he might go to Grandpa's, and he went.

Grandpa, who was privately let into the secret, took up the parable in a discreet way, and said how glad he was that Jack did not allow "Mr. Temper" to make him naughty so that he could not have come ; and he went to a drawer in which he kept things to present to the grandchildren, and there he found a book full of pictures such as the little ones love, and that he presented to Master Jack as a reward for his victory over "Mr. Temper."

Sometimes the boy would come and say that he had "mastered 'Mr. Temper,' and sent him to foreign lands where the wolves might eat him up ;" but the Grandpa carefully explained to him that he would have to fight "Mr. Temper" all his life ; that, though it was hard work for a little boy, it would become easier and easier the more patiently and perseveringly he stuck to his task. Jack was thus taught practically the sweet results of self-restraint and obedience, and the bitter consequences of self-indulgence and wilfulness. When the idea of self-

conquest gradually dawns upon the youthful intellect, and the work of self-conquest is begun in good time, steadily continued, and intelligently fostered by maternal and other influences, what suffering and disappointment the child will be spared !

It is of the utmost importance, then, "not to encourage weeds when they are young," because then they can be easily eradicated. No amount of labor is too great, no amount of patient and intelligent perseverance should be wanting on the part of those who are engaged in this primary work of putting the little feet in the right paths, and setting the children themselves to watch against, and to resist "Mr. Temper," who so constantly torments them into misbehaving themselves. I need not dwell longer on this point. Intelligent and affectionate parents will adapt themselves, as far as they can, to the varieties of character and disposition with which they may have to deal. Let them get this idea of their co-operation with their parents into the children's minds, and then, being sure of parental sympathy in every time of failure, those children will cheerfully begin the work, and will gradually attain an otherwise impossible mastery over themselves, very much as they acquire the ability to *walk* when they are helped up after every fall with the kindly word and fond embrace which encourage them to persevere. Their little minds may but feebly comprehend the task at first, they do but "see men as trees walking." They will see

more and more clearly as their intellect develops. It is like storing their memories with hymns, which convey but few and indistinct ideas to them at present. As their minds expand they will see much of the significance of the teaching with which their infant memories were stored, and in after-life, in the times of difficulty, danger, temptation and affliction, which are the common lot of humanity, the cautions and encouragements embodied in early hymns and teachings will come home to them so as to be of immediate and direct practical value and importance. This is a process the success of which, if it is patiently and perseveringly and intelligently followed up, will bring peace to the heart of many a troubled mother. It wants patience, tact, intelligence and perseverance, according to the character and disposition of the child. And it is well to recollect that the little one is not always on the watch. He is like grown up people in that respect, and we must bear in mind our own shortcomings, and learn to expect but moderate measures of success, and not to be too exacting at the outset. If the child forgets the necessity for vigilance, and is betrayed into conduct contrary to the teachings we have imparted, we do well to recollect that it is very much the same with grown-up people. Personally, as a parent, I attach so much importance to this part of the subject, that I feel as if this book were worth writing, if there were to be nothing else in it but this chapter. The suggestion of "Mr. Temper"

and his tactics, and the need for ever being on the look-out to frustrate his designs, was just the thing for that particular boy ; but parents will of course study their own children so as to make this suggestion to them concerning the existence of an influence for evil within and around them, that must be fought and kept down, because of the consequences of yielding, in a manner that will be most likely to make the desired impression upon them. The great thing to do is to encourage them to undertake the conflict with the assurance that the more they stick to their task the easier will it become, and that no power on earth can relieve them from the necessity of waging this conflict which is the common responsibility of the whole of the human race. But I hardly need tell parents how to talk to their own children. The mother knows the best way of getting at the heart and mind and memory of her own offspring.

But while our parents were the first and foremost in influencing our early career the character and conduct of brothers and sisters and other relatives and playmates have also exercised influences which have materially assisted in making us what we are, and have planted in us perhaps some forces of character that want strengthening or counteracting just as do some of our hereditary tendencies. The time comes early in youth when we all begin to be able to do something towards regulating and correcting the results of such influences. At school we have

at least *some* power in the selection of our companions. In after-life we have still more power, and if we cannot in the course of our daily pursuits, in business and in the social circle, entirely avoid undesirable acquaintances, we certainly can avoid making friends and companions of them. As parents let us recollect our serious responsibility for the influence we exercise on those with whom we mingle at home or at work, and never forget how small a circumstance has made a deep impression upon us when we were young, and has had a direct and continuous influence upon our future career.

“A pebble in the streamlet scant
Has turned the course of many a river;
A dewdrop, on the baby plant,
Has warped the giant oak for ever !”

Let us remember this in all we say or do at the fireside ; in all that we say or do to influence our children in the choice of their companions and pursuits ; especially at that important period of their lives when they first begin to assert themselves, and to “take the reins,” as it were, “into their own hands.” When we consider the influence of the little pebble, what may be the influence of the large stones which we sometimes place in our children’s way ? Designedly we do not say *always*, but we do place them there frequently from want of thought, and we are responsible for the exercise of such mischievous influences on their present and their future.

What are we doing with our power of "influence" altogether, not only our power of influencing our children, but our power of influence upon those whom our example may directly or indirectly affect? What is it? Good, bad, or indifferent? This ought to be one of the subjects of that earnest and thoughtful reflection which we have recommended, and the very best of us will find much to regret, and also to amend if we will subject ourselves to a serious self-examination.

Another point worthy of consideration is, that when we have done all that we can do to eliminate the undesirable from our companionships we still cannot do all that we should like to do in this way, because undesirable persons may be associated with us in business, or as neighbors. We have, however, a clear and distinct duty towards such persons, and that is to avoid them as much as possible and strive to counteract their evil influence upon us if we find that we cannot exercise a positively good influence upon them. Our first duty is to do all we can, at all times and in whatever way, to lead them into and keep them in the right path ; assuming that our will-power is strong enough to lead them and to resist their unworthily influencing us.

CHAPTER V.

THE CULTIVATION AND EXERCISE OF THE WILL.

THE conflict of forces favorable or antagonistic to the continuance and progress of existence is observable everywhere in nature. Nowhere is it more real or more important than in the human body.

“By method and by plan,
Which in dim outline we can see,
Fit organs are built up in man
For functions yet to be.”

In recent times we have been scared every now and then by fresh revelations concerning the germs of disease that enter unbidden into our physical system, and make havoc there in every part of it that is weak or in any way out of order; and we have been seriously warned that only the careful preservation of our general health can effectually secure the resistance of the operations of these innumerable but invisible foes. It is disconcerting to be told that these mighty, though invisible hosts, can do such serious damage to our physical frames, producing cholera, influenza, fever, rheumatism and many other maladies. Further researches of our scientists have, however, revealed to us the com-

forting fact that nature has provided us with a whole army of defenders against these enemies. These creatures are called leucocytes, and when a leucocyte meets one of these injurious bacteria it puts forth "feelers," takes possession of the enemy, absorbs it, digests it into soluble matter, and then assimilates it. The only way to support these gallant defenders of our physical frame is to keep our bodies in good health. When we neglect this duty, our friends, the leucocytes, are vanquished, the bacteria triumph, and disease ensues. When the leucocytes are triumphant over the bacteria we are restored to health; when it is a drawn battle between these forces, then the disease assumes what is called a "chronic" form. Here again we have a lesson from nature. Just as these leucocytes help us against our bacterial invaders so long as we keep in good general health, so every man who cultivates his will-power, and begins to succeed in using it wisely, will find aid from many unexpected quarters, for "nothing succeeds like success," and hosts of people are ready to help those who are already "getting on." This is the universal experience of mankind.

We see, though even as yet in "dim outline," many of these mysteries of nature. Our scientists have devoted and are devoting themselves, in the most laborious and painstaking manner, to discover all that can be discovered about them, and the greatest care is taken at our best educational insti-

tutions to let the students have the advantage of the latest researches. Now, when we clearly show that upon the strength and development of the 'will-power' must depend the success or failure of every man in the attainment of whatever object he may have in view, why cannot our educational authorities set themselves to work to make the cultivation of will-power, and the explanation of its influence in the battle of life, a systematic and distinct feature in their educational systems?

There are few teachers who have not disagreeable practical illustrations of what the will-power of a boy can do in annoying them, and checking the boy's own progress when it is systematically neglected; why do we not see what can be done when it is systematically and earnestly cultivated and regulated? If you can get a man to "make up his mind to do a thing," that is proverbially "half the battle." There are scores of phrases of this character current in every language that show it to be the common experience of humanity that those who do, by exercise, cultivate this potent force meet with success. Even a prince or a millionaire cannot get physical strength without exercise, and the poorest youth who ever aspired to athletic contests has a perfectly equal chance with them in proportion to his constitution, which is, as a rule, not likely to be the worst of the three; for Dame Nature is perfectly impartial in her favors. She rewards those who obey her laws, and she makes

"the punishment fit the crime" of those who do not. The man who has money to provide his son with a superior education can, of course, other things being equal, place the boy many steps ahead of the poor lad ; but, in tens of thousands of cases, it is clear that the will-power of the poor lad practically puts him on a level with the rich man's son, and often enables him not only to overtake him but even to leave him far behind. Where a boy has a strong will as well as ample means, of course he has a material and permanent advantage over less-favored competitors.

Some seem born to win success. They have ample means, powerful connections, family influence, and will-power as well ; but the vast majority of men have to be the architects of their own fortune, if their fortunes are to be won. As a rule, the winds of opposition are an advantage. Even a head wind is better than a calm in which no progress whatever can be made. But as steam helps the progress of a vessel by enabling it with a favorable wind to go ahead still faster, and to make progress even when there is not a breath of wind stirring, so the force of a well-exercised will-power enables men to make progress when others do but idly complain of the "badness of the times," "the want of opportunity," "bad luck," and all that sort of thing. Therefore its generation and application ought to be a recognized part of our national education.

Professor Huxley says : " Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to *make* yourself do the thing you have to do *when* it ought to be done, *whether you like it or not* ; it is the first lesson which ought to be learned, and, however early a man's training begins, it is probably the last lesson he learns thoroughly."

This is just the self-control which we are endeavoring to advocate, the cultivation of which ought to form a leading feature in all moral and intellectual training ; for, as Milton said : " He that *reigns within himself*, and rules his passions, desires and fears, is more than a king." Surely it is worth considering by those who teach, whether they will not strive to cultivate and develop this mighty force, which is capable of giving such effectual aid, openly, earnestly and systematically ; not as any new discovery, but as the application of a truth recognized for ages, but imperfectly perceived, and not even yet practically, systematically and deliberately employed.

The Preacher tells his hearers that if they enter on this task of self-conquest, ' Heaven will help them ;' but would they not be far more powerfully impressed if he were to explain to them how that help is obtained ? If he were to show to them that it is a law of nature, that constant exercise develops any and every kind of faculty ; and that the longer and more earnestly the effort is continued the easier the task gradually becomes, they would

take fresh courage, and set about their work far more hopefully, and far more zealously. An earnest, thoughtful, practical discourse, devoted to the development of this point, would be of more practical worth than many a long sermon on some abstruse points of doctrine or of ritual. People too often seem to believe that the Almighty will *make* them all they ought to be, and that they have nothing to do but to desire it. They should be taught that they have to fight the battle, and Heaven helps those who help themselves, and no others.

The same principle applies with equal force to the education of the young as applies to the struggles of manhood. With them the will-power is not so fully formed, or so firmly set, and is therefore more easily dealt with. I know, by practical experience, that it may be difficult, but that it is by no means impossible, to teach even young children that they possess this power, that exercise will strengthen it, while neglect of exercise will weaken it; and that on the measure of its cultivation depends the extent of their future success, whatever the object they may seek to attain. The difficulties of the task may vary, no doubt, according to the character and disposition of the child; but it *can* be done, and it is worth the expenditure of any amount of trouble to accomplish it. It will repay the teacher by the increased efficiency of his pupil; and it will confer a boon of inestimable value on

the pupil himself. It will furnish him with a weapon for the battle of life that will not grow rusty, but will increase in efficiency in proportion to the extent to which it is employed. The boy will see his classmates go into serious training when they are to engage in any contest of an athletic character ; and what is more reasonable than that he should learn from his teacher to look upon training as equally important in relation to the mental and moral life ? It will seem to him the most natural thing in the world ; for has he not already been convinced by his conversations with his schoolfellows that training is needed, and that on the perfection or otherwise of such training depends the extent to which he is successful ?

That portion of the Press which seeks to promote the elevation of the masses would do well to insist on the fact that, as the unit is, so is the mass composed of such units ; and that, without waiting for teachers, or preachers, or philanthropists, or legislators, or anybody else, there is always *one* of those units with whom the work of reformation may be at once and effectually begun. It is the man himself. We shall approach the millennium in proportion as we multiply the numbers of such units, who, men *and* women, weary of waiting for regeneration *en masse*, or for some new law, or for some additional benevolence, or for anything of a material and outward kind, set about the work by themselves, in themselves, and for themselves, *individually*.

This is a good work that ought to 'begin at home,' though of course it ought not to end there. In fact it cannot possibly end there, since no individual is so insignificant as to be without a circle around him of persons who are influenced by his example ; and the mystery of influence is so inscrutable that often what may seem to us the most unlikely means are most largely blessed to the benefit of our fellow-men. Such influence received they in turn exercise on others, and so it goes on, for ever widening and deepening, till we cannot imagine what the final issue is to be.

Have we not, then, even if we view the question from this point alone, sufficient inducement to lead us to make a firm and gallant stand in favor of a course which it is so evident begins by benefiting ourselves, and then goes on to bless multitudes of other people, not only to-day but for ever?

But if we cannot have, just yet, a full and formal recognition of the education of the will-power, as a regular feature in our educational system, there are many ways of exercising this will-power, both in action and in resistance, which are open to every one of us, and which would be useful to every one of us, as well as to the circles in the midst of which we live. Let us begin at our own firesides ; for it is there that the happiness after which we are all seeking, with whatever will-power we are able to muster, is holiest and most enjoyable. Many seem to act as if they thought that family affection and its

products were something of which there was, and must of necessity be, under any conditions, a good supply on hand in every well-regulated household; and when they come home from work they expect to be able to "turn it on" as they would the gas, and they no more blame themselves for any inadequacy of supply than they would if the coals had been allowed to run out through their not having been apprised of the fact that they were getting low. "Evil is wrought by want of thought as well as by want of heart," and thoughtless people are as truly responsible when the wells of conjugal affection run dry as heartless people are. +

We shall not pander to the pride of the "lords of creation" on the one hand, nor shall we make excuses for the "better halves," as they used to be called, though latterly they have ceased to be "halves" at all, and the question now seems to be whether they are not in all respects man's equal, and, in several matters, his superior. At present, however, we have nothing to do with the relative positions of the husband and wife, or with questions of sexual inferiority, equality, or superiority.

In this one matter of promoting the happiness of the household, the woman is often superior to the man. But in most matters of family influence, it is "six of the one and half a dozen of the other." Both husband and wife must co-operate cheerfully, intelligently, and earnestly, if conjugal love and affection are to be deepened, strengthened, or even sustained

in existence at all. Where marriage proves a "failure," both parties *are* usually to blame, though it may be not *equally* to blame.

Now conjugal affection is not something to be "turned on" like the gas ; nor is the supply of it to be relied on like the supply of coals, or of any other article of regular domestic consumption, that can be ordered and stored at will, and paid for on delivery or otherwise. It is more like a tender plant that is brought into the house and may be cultivated in congenial soil, with due attention and care, with plenty of fresh air and tempered sunshine. With proper treatment it will flourish and afford pleasure to all who are within the sphere of its genial influences ; but ill-treat or neglect the plant, and it will languish. Hot water is an excellent thing for many purposes, but it does not agree with plants ; and a family which is "always in hot water," as the phrase goes, owing to the misguided action of one or more of its members, has an atmosphere in which that great source of happiness, conjugal affection, can never exist for any length of time, and certainly cannot develop its finer features, or bestow its more enduring benedictions.

Now it is at this point that every family man should commence those exercises of the will-power to which we would direct and assist him. Perhaps the will of the husband is already tolerably strong, and only needs to be directed into the proper channels, and held in wise restraints. If what some

wicked people say be true, the lady of the house is not always deficient in this power, even if she errs sometimes in the application of it ; for the poet has said : —

“ If she will, she will, you may depend on’t ;
If she won’t, she won’t, and there’s an end on’t.”

It depends, of course, entirely on *what it is* she wills, and on the *timeliness* of her acts of will, whether this state of mind is, in her case, praiseworthy or blamable. A good time in which to commence this exercise of the will-power, is when things have gone a little wrong in the home. The sooner you begin, the easier the task will be. When you are under very great provocation, when you are just about to retort with one of your most crushing sarcasms, with words that sting, inflict a wound, and long leave a scar, however earnestly love may afterward try to heal, master yourself just at that point, and pull yourself up with all the vigor of which you are capable ; either say nothing, or try the practical application of that Scripture in which you probably profess to believe, and give “the soft answer that turneth away wrath.” It may have been a smart thing that you were just about to say. It may have been richly deserved. It may be that you have put up with that sort of thing quite as long as you felt able to. Do not waste your time and energy in the discussion of such considerations, but just try how far you have got in this mastery of self, of which we

have seen that the cultivation is so desirable. We do not ignore the hardship of such a task, especially under circumstances which we can so readily imagine. But this is just the occasion when you may hopefully begin your exercise ; and the reward of your self-restraint will be both prompt and ample, as you will speedily discover for yourself. For either of the disputants in a domestic jar to try and get "the last (and often the bitterest) word," when there happens to be a difference of opinion, is like sprinkling a hot, bitter, caustic fluid on that poor plant of which I have spoken. It will cause its leaves to wither and decay, it will retard its growth, it will kill its buds, and if it is kept on long enough it will eventually prove fatal to the life of the plant. The evil seldom, if ever, ends with the day of the dispute ; the damage done can, indeed, never be perfectly repaired, whatever the love of one or the love of both may do towards the accomplishment of that result. There will always be a smudge just there ; and it needs no artificial memory to recall such painful scenes. They present themselves before us like some weird panorama, just at a time, perhaps, when better counsels may prevail, and they thus cast a shadow over moments that otherwise would be all sunshine. This is not a pleasant subject to reflect upon, however profitable it may be ; and we shall leave it with these hints to all and sundry whom it may concern, married or unmarried, members of a family, or persons living with strangers.

A little forbearance, common-sense, and will-power, properly directed, will save much heart-burning in the present, and prevent many bitter and unpleasant memories from obscuring the felicity of future moments.

If a schoolboy could be shown that, in the diligent pursuit of his studies, in prompt and cheerful obedience to orders, and in the avoidance of that which is prohibited for the general benefit of himself and schoolfellows, he was simply laying up stores, polishing up weapons, and undergoing a training that would contribute to his success in after-life, his teachers would not have half so much trouble with him. Character would then be, in part at least, self-cultivated, personal energy would be developed, and greater moral results would most surely be attained than can be expected under present systems. Let the teacher make the effort. / Let the young workman take this exercise in hand ; let him see that there are no masters capable of ignoring merit when they see it, and only a few here and there who are not ready to reward it. If the workman's lot should happen to be cast with one of these, he should not let the master's seeming indifference discourage him, but should keep on *pegging away*. His merits will, sooner or later, become known, and when the time comes for him to transfer his services to another quarter his merits will be rewarded.

Will-power must be exercised to enable you to fill up gaps that may have been left in your educa-

tion ; and it is suggestive to recall to mind that Cobbett could, amidst the many distractions of the barrack-room, find time to master the English and French languages sufficiently to write a clever grammar of each of them, — works which command attention and admiration even to this day. There can be no valid excuse for neglecting self-culture, or for a man's not doing something far better than he is doing in thousands of cases. There are plenty of people to flatter the working classes of this country, and what they most pressingly want is some few brave souls who will tell them a little wholesome truth, whether it be palatable or otherwise. And this is the plain truth : few of our working men are really doing *all* that they could do to fit themselves for superior positions. They want less apathy and more backbone of worthy ambition and energy. That is the thing that is amiss with very many of them. It is well that some one should have the straightforwardness to tell them of this, whether they are disposed to believe it or not. I am fully conscious of the fact that the enormous strides made by the working classes during the past half-century have been marvellous and very gratifying ; and they must afford extreme pleasure to all who are interested in the progress of the people. I rejoice in this, but still I say that no very large number are doing *all* that they are capable of doing towards the improvement of their positions ; and this is not less unsatisfactory because the same must be said of

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young men and young women, too, in other ranks of social life.

Life-assurance companies have done much to encourage the cultivation of the will-power; and, from the very nature of things, so long as they continue their operations they must continue to have that influence. The act of thrift required to put by the pence for the first payment, is repeated more or less in the self-denial needed to provide subsequent payments; and the repetition of the *act* of thrift forms the *habit* of thrift, which is expansive in its operations. We find that, as the habit is kept up, it becomes easier and easier to lay something by; the man soon sees a step further than he ever saw before, and does something more for the future by means of increasing thrift, and he secures an increasing income in consequence of that increasing thrift. By a rigid adhesion to these principles of action the man gradually builds up his position. Sometimes he delays his progress by timidly hesitating to take the tide at the "flood" that "leads on to fortune," and sometimes he throws himself back by a too ready leap in the dark in the hope of making progress, but this proves useful to him in teaching him not to rush in where angels fear to tread. Judgment is wanted as well as courage in taking any important step in life. But if he perseveres, in spite of falls and failures, he will eventually ensure success, just as a child gradually learns to walk well in spite of his many knocks and falls while exercising his walking faculties.

But this power of *making yourself do* something that is right to do, though you may not want to do it, is a most valuable force that may be applied in a hundred different ways in the path of life to promote our own interests, and the interests of those whose prosperity we desire to help. And it is equally useful in restraining you from doing things which you might *like* to do, but which you know are unlawful or inexpedient. Here, then, is a force that acts both ways in enabling us to accomplish that which we desire, and to avoid that which is wrong, to catch that which can help us, and to remove from our paths that which must hinder us. It helps us to keep out of harm's ways, to avoid associations that may lead us to waste, idleness, drinking, gambling, or anything else that would impede our upward and onward march. After the laborious work of self-conquest has been even partially accomplished, or even after it has been started under favorable auspices, it would be the height of folly to undo the work which we have done, as, for instance, we should certainly do by resorting to those *beverages* that are acknowledged to be the *solvents of the will*, since in this way you would build up, as it were, with one hand and pull down with the other. It will only be a question of time, and the forces will become equal, and there is every reason to fear that the *solvent* will gradually gain, and ever retain, the upper hand. Then we must say *good-bye* to all thoughts of upward progress. Shall we not, rather,

by precept and example, set about a zealous and systematic cultivation of the "will-power," so that our own example of abstinence may be the means of influencing others? Then we shall see its development amongst our fellow-men in a hundred ways that will tend to their personal and social advancement. Then the will-power will be transmitted and re-transmitted with perpetually increasing force to generations that are yet to follow; and the day will come in which the sensitive man will no longer complain that he lives in "an age of mediocrity."

We shall have a numerous progeny of really great men to do honor to our race, and to promote the general well-being of their fellow-countrymen. It is by educating the individual, or rather by teaching him to help himself, that we can best elevate the mass, and enable them to participate personally in the "survival of the fittest." Dean Kitchen told his hearers the other day that "the foundation of all progress was that we should *individually* choose the good and refuse the evil." It is with the *individual* that the responsibility rests, and it is on the *individual* that the happiness which success produces will be bestowed. It is true that the root cannot be nourished without the branches, leaves, flowers, fruit, participating. But the *individual* is the root; let us make and keep *that* all right, and the growth will go on automatically and satisfactorily enough. If we make the individual

what he ought to be, we are thereby gradually improving the mass, and that is the best and surest way of doing it. "A nation" cannot, in any sense, be "born in a day" unless the individual is what he ought to be.

CHAPTER VI.

THIS SELF-CONQUEST IS THE BASIS OF THE CHRISTIAN
RELIGION.

WHAT is Christianity but a system of persistent self-denial? When the Prodigal Son "came to himself," and clearly saw the degradation into which he had fallen, he resolved to "arise and go to his father." He abandoned all that he had once thought attractive and pleasurable, and he voluntarily offered to accept the lowest place in his father's house, so long as he might be permitted to return home again. He was weary of the wild freedom he had been enjoying, and longed to resume the mild and wholesome restraints of the paternal roof.

So a man, when he becomes a Christian, abandons the exclusively selfish objects that have hitherto had his chief attention, and strives to conform himself to the great and perfect example of the life of Christ. This entire change of motive and of conduct of course involves, in the measure that the endeavor is conscientious and continuous, severe and persistent self-denial, in avoiding that which is evil, though agreeable, and in seeking after that which is good, though it may be irksome to our

imperfectly subjugated natures. This conflict is of necessity continuous as well as severe, and it terminates only with life itself. It extends to every thought, word, and act ; its intensity may *diminish* as the work of self-conquest proceeds, but it never ceases altogether during life. Even the ascetic who withdraws from the world in which he has been commanded to "let his light shine before men," and retires into the gloomy precincts of a cell, only escapes the evil which might have surrounded him, and intensifies that evil which is still left within him.

When you "come to yourself," repentance is the first step, and that requires a vigorous effort of self-denial. To satisfy the most elastic conscience, such effort must begin at once, and be persistently continued. Only those who are truly honest with their own consciences, are, or can be, aware of the full significance of this conflict, and of the extent to which they fall short both in striving after the good and in resisting the evil. They do not come up even to their own imperfect conceptions of what it is possible for them to accomplish in this direction, if they would but develop their will-power by constant exercise. And this they feel they ought to have done.

"*Heaven helps those who help themselves.*" — It does this by giving us a free will, the power of increasing the strength of our will by exercise, and the responsibility for doing our duty in this respect.

But Heaven will *not* help us if we neglect or refuse to do our duty in this matter of cultivating the will-power by constant exercise. The appalling extent to which this great and important duty is at present neglected by "all sorts and conditions of men," is one of the most disheartening aspects of the outlook, in the view of all those who are trying to do something for the amelioration of the general condition of the people.

Heaven not only refuses to help those who will not use the means provided for helping themselves, but Heaven helps those who try in strict proportion to the extent to which they do help themselves. The man with one talent was told that he ought to have employed it to his master's advantage, and because he had not done so, it was taken from him and given to his fellow-servant who had made good use of what had been entrusted to him.

The inevitable necessity for this conflict in order to gain will-power is presented to us at every step that we take in the *Christian* life, just as it is at every upward step in matters material, or social, or political, or professional. We *have* only what we conquer for ourselves, and we are aided in proportion to our valor and perseverance. This applies to the whole human family, the only exceptions being those who are content to plod along in a rut which has been made ready for them by their parents, or their friends, or by more remote progenitors.

Christ tells us plainly that we must "repent" or

"perish;" that we must "seek *first*" the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and He promises that "other things shall be added" in the case of those who do so. But the natural man seeks *self* first, and hence the necessity for this self-conquest commences at the initial step in the Christian life, and continues to the very end of it. We are told to "love our neighbor as ourselves," and this, perhaps, demands from multitudes as much self-conquest as is needed to comply with any requirement of the Christian system. We must "love our enemies and pray for those who despitefully use us." It is the man who most diligently cultivates this will-power to help himself that is best entitled to pray for grace and strength to resist temptation when it is presented to him in some unusually seductive form, when he may find it very hard to "lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset him."

Christ reminds those who affect a superiority over their brethren that "whosoever would be first among them, shall be their servant." It will be a long and hard task to get this weakness of wanting to be first out of most people, and to produce in them that humility which was inculcated by Christ when He took up the little child and set him in the midst and said, "Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." It was not the proud Pharisee who "thanked God that he was not as other men are," but the poor publican

who cried "God be merciful to me a sinner," who "went down to his house justified." It is a "cross" that we have to take up in entering on the Christian career. Our Lord said, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me." He said, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee;" but how few, even of His professed followers, are prepared for so drastic a remedy as this? Thousands and tens of thousands are not even willing to lay aside the sin that doth so easily beset them. The drink may be only one of the difficulties, but it is the worst and the most easily besetting of them all, and the most inimical to Christian advancement, and indeed to any other form of personal progress. We may, therefore, take the drink hindrance as an illustration. The Apostle Paul says, "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak;" and the Apostle James tells us that a "perfect man is able to bridle *the whole body*." But tens of thousands of professed Christians are not willing to cut off even this one indulgence, and they pretend to justify themselves by saying: "Because many men take too much is no reason why I should deny myself altogether." We affirm that it is. That excuse is only another form of putting the first murderer's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" If you give a man money, or any form of material help, you are giving him what he sees

you can very well do without. When you persuade a man to abstain, owing to excesses in which he has indulged, he naturally prefers to try your own plan of "moderation," and he believes that he can be "moderate" as well as you. But when he sees you willing to make a personal sacrifice, and to abstain altogether for the sake of example to him and others, the duty comes home to him in an altogether more powerful way. It is impossible to exaggerate the influence for good of this personal and practical sympathy; and as the Bishop of London recently declared, "the self-sacrifice men make for the sake of fighting with the evil of intemperance, has an effect out of all proportion to the greatness of the sacrifice itself." It is the difference between the sign-post which merely points the way, and the fellow-traveller who accompanies you on your dark and dreary journey.

But if you will not make this little sacrifice for the sake of the advantages you would personally derive from it, or for the sake of the example you may offer to those whose temptations are stronger and more frequent, and whose powers of resistance are feebler than your own, what will be your reflections when you see that those who have been beguiled by your advocacy of that indefinite and undefinable thing called "moderation" into a continuance in their own efforts to keep within bounds, hopelessly sink into the abyss from which they have at last lost both the power and the will even to

attempt to rescue themselves? They are, in fact, incapable of being rescued, except by the forcible removal for a time of all power of procuring the drink. What will be your anguish when you see that "the only enemy we have to *fear*," which you have set them the example of *not fearing*, has caught them in its tentacles like a mighty octopus?

In every part of Christ's teaching we see this necessity for self-conquest, so that we may be able to do that which we are commanded to do, though it may not be agreeable to us, and able to avoid that which is prohibited, though it may be pleasurable to our imperfectly subjugated natures. This cultivation of the will-power is therefore one of the most essential features of Christ's teaching, and without it any progress is as impossible in the Christian life as it is in any other undertaking by means of which we hope to ameliorate our condition.

The Apostle Paul tells the Galatians this: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." He tells the Colossians that they must "mortify their members which are upon earth, and set their affections on things above," must "put off anger, wrath, blasphemy, filthy communications out of their mouths," that they must not "lie one to another." He tells the Romans that they must "crucify the old man, that the body of sin may be destroyed, and that henceforth they

should not serve sin." Speaking of himself, the Apostle Paul says: "I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection." This process of bringing the body into subjection is long and difficult, and thousands descend into the grave without having accomplished any great things in that direction. The Apostle Paul encourages the Corinthians by telling them that "God will not suffer them to be tempted above that which they are able to bear," and that "out of every temptation he will make a way for their escape." He assures them, "If ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." This self-control is compared by the Apostle James to the "bits which we put into the mouths of horses, so that we may move their whole body," and to the very small helm by which we are able to direct the course of a ship, though it is "so great, and is driven by fierce winds."

Many more passages might be quoted to the same effect, and a most useful discourse might be delivered confined exclusively to the practical aspects of this conflict of life. Our present object is to show that the heading to this chapter, representing self-conquest to be the basis of the Christian requirement, has been abundantly justified.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW CAN WE BECOME WHAT WE DESIRE TO BE?

WE must "lay aside every weight," as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, and "run with patience the race which is set before us." We must remember that, however feeble every step we take may be, it should be distinctly a step in advance, and we must not be disheartened if our progress fails to be as rapid and as brilliant as we may desire.

"We have not *wings*, we cannot soar;
But we have *feet* to scale and climb
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.

"Standing on what too long we bore,
With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,
We may discern, unseen before,
A path to higher destinies.

"Nor deem the irrevocable past
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last
To something nobler we attain."

LONGFELLOW.

The very slowness of our progress and the appalling magnitude of the task before us combine to

exert a depressing influence upon us. But we must call up our will-power, and exclaim with the prophet of old, "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain!" That is the spirit in which we must go to work, and keep at work. We must not wait for "inspiration," or rely on "genius," which has been aptly described as "a capacity for taking infinite pains," or count upon "a slice of luck," but *work*, with a gradually growing will-power. It is in this way that even the poor man's child becomes rich and influential. Those who start with fewer obstacles ought to do better still.

Self-conquest. — You must cultivate this will-power, and bear in mind that while you do what you can for the benefit of others, your first duty is *self-conquest*, the rectification of both "heredity" and "surroundings;" and that the victory in this battle is the noblest achievement human nature is capable of accomplishing. It is by self-conquest that we become what we desire to be. Whether, as a member of the community in the midst of which you dwell, you seek to attain a social position which shall enable your children to start from the point at which you left off, rather than from that at which you yourself had to begin; whether you are desirous of gaining eminence in scholarship, or of attaining some high professional position; whether, as a Christian, you desire to reach a higher grade in the Christian life by resisting and counter-

acting the evil that is within and around you ; whatever your object in life may be, there is only this *one uphill road of self-conquest* by which it can be attained. You must learn to climb *it*, and you must learn to use discretion, as well as to gain strength to remove, or as far as possible to surmount, every sort of hindrance and obstacle that may be found to lie in your path.

On the other hand, there is not an adult in this country who cannot look round amongst the acquaintances he has had, and miss some who, simply for want of this self-conquest, have fallen from the positions which they had been able to attain ; men who have "gone up like a rocket and come down like the stick."

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT ARE THE HINDRANCES IN OUR WAY?

IF we are to become what we desire to be, we must carefully consider what are the helps and hindrances that are in our path ; and how we can best overcome them. This is a point on which I have, personally, the strongest possible convictions, and I shall not mince matters in putting my case. I say then, without the faintest hesitation, that *drink* is the greatest of all the hindrances that lie in our path, whatever may be the object which we are seeking to attain, whether it be wealth, or rank, or professional eminence, or commercial success, or social position, or growth in religion. *Drink* is not only the greatest hindrance, but it is equal in mischievous influence to all the other hindrances put together, and it is the agency for starting and sustaining so many other hindrances.

Let us see how far science and experience will really warrant us in so decidedly denouncing drink as the greatest obstacle to the gaining of self-conquest, and so to social progress. Looking around us, we find such numbers of cases in which a boy has risen from the most abject poverty to wealth

and honor, that we are well assured the humblest parentage, and the most lowly early surroundings, present no insuperable barrier to future greatness. But, when drink once takes firm hold on a man, we never find that man able to attain permanent distinction, or to retain for lengthened periods any important position that he may have secured. Intoxicating drink is not a necessary of life. Millions get on well without it. It is not a food; it contains no nutriment; and even in what are called moderate doses, it is only in rare cases useful as a medicine. It is injurious to health, paves the way for disease, renders the drinker more liable to accidents and injuries than the abstainer is; and it takes longer for even a moderate drinker to recover from an accident or injury than, other things being equal, it takes an abstainer.

It may be said that there are plenty of other hindrances to human progress besides drink. No doubt there are, and some of them are inevitable. But why should we voluntarily add another to the list? Drink is the first and the worst enemy we have to fight. We have many other enemies; but drink, as the late Duke of Albany observed, is "the only enemy we have to *fear*." Other enemies we can counteract or dispose of as we go along; but drink dogs our footsteps and grows upon us. It often conquers us by rendering us not only unable, but at length even unwilling, to resist. In most other cases we may say "whilst there is life there is hope,"

and that "it is never too late to mend." But neither of these common maxims can be applied to drink. There is a day in many a drinker's history, when, though there yet is *life*, there can be no longer any reasonable ground for *hope*, when we can no longer say "it is never too late to mend," because the drink has gradually undermined, and at last effectually destroyed both the power and the will to reform, both the ability and the desire to forsake the destroyer. The *craving* has, at this point, become a bodily disease, requires medical treatment. The first condition, and one absolutely essential in a case of this kind, is the forcible removal of the patient from the possibility of obtaining drink, at any rate for a time ; and along with this medical treatment for the removal of the tendency which has now become a disease.

The will is our rudder. — We have tried to impress on the reader the fact that the will is the "rudder," without which it is impossible for him to steer the vessel, without which it will certainly float down the stream and take its chance, or roll about in the ocean trough, helplessly yielding to every passing rush of the mighty waves. The will is our rudder ; and the late Cardinal Manning, with all his practical sagacity, never uttered a word of greater moment to the well-being of his fellow-men than when he declared, touching this part of our question, that "*Drink is the solvent of the will.*" We have shown that on the solidity and strength of the

will, and on the extent of its power, our progress and success mainly depend. "Drink is the solvent of the will," — that was the way in which the late Cardinal Manning expressed it, and the idea is a very impressive and instructive one. I have compared this will-power to the rudder of a vessel; alcohol solves the will-power, the steering apparatus, and the vessel, in consequence, floats, as I have said, like a helpless log upon the waters. The address from which I quote was delivered twenty years ago, and it was prepared, the Cardinal explained, at the suggestion of Mr. Robert Rae, Secretary of the *National Temperance League*.

Supposing you were shown that, in one of the great ocean-going steamers, there were certain influences at work which were gradually enfeebling and would succeed in utterly dissolving the steering apparatus; would you be persuaded to make a voyage in that steamer? Some persons might embark in her just as some persons continue to drink in spite of every warning and entreaty. Such persons would not really *believe* in the solvent power of the influences that were at work; and they would take their chances of safety, just as they take their chance and continue to drink, in spite of the many frightful examples of ruin that lie all around them. "Men think all men mortal but themselves;" and there are thousands at this moment, who, though they see drink like a mighty demon, gripping so many strong men in its fatal embraces, confidently

believe that *they* will have sufficient strength in themselves to resist the evil influence. It is true that some do resist ; but what a fearful risk it is for a man to run ! It is as frightful as it is unnecessary. The man who, of all others I have known, would, as I felt confident, preserve his self-control in this respect to the end of his life, has just fallen a victim before the drink demon ; and, broken down in health and lightened in pocket, he has retired into obscurity from an important public position which he was no longer able to fill.

The Cardinal, in the address from which I have quoted, pointed out the action of this mighty solvent in its early and unrecognized stages, and he showed, from his own personal knowledge and experience, not amongst the working classes only, but amongst the upper and middle classes of Society, quite as fully, that the operation of this solvent was the weakening and even destruction of the domestic affections and the peace and happiness of the home ; and that this was often accomplished without attracting the attention of even the neighbors and friends of the victim, until it was hopelessly too late to repair the mischief. "God only knows," said the Cardinal, "the extent of the misery that is made in this direction." Every one who has gone about the world with his eyes open will confirm the Cardinal's experience ; for every one must have known something about these secret sorrows, these unseen degradations, these life-long

tortures, these heartbreaking alienations of conjugal affection, and all that they imply and involve, by his personal observations and among his personal acquaintances. The general public gets a glimpse into British Interiors now and then through the Divorce Court or the Police Court, or some open and public scandal; but there is an inconceivably mighty mass of human misery to be endured *before* these lower depths of degradation are reached; and this is entirely hidden from the general public, and often to a considerable extent from even the intimate friends of the sufferers themselves.

Drink not only enfeebles the will-power, but it weakens the recuperative energy by which the constitution is enabled to ward off disease. Sir James Sawyer, M. D., says: "Science shows that a man's normal power of resisting the inroads of infecting disease is diminished or lost, when his body is under the influence of alcoholic drinks."

We have seen how powerfully this part of our subject was dealt with by the Cardinal. From a moral, social and religious point of view, his facts, arguments and deductions will be accepted by many thousands of Christians of all denominations, in all parts of the world, without any hesitation. But there are others who will take only *scientific* evidence on such questions. Let us see, therefore, what science tells us. For that purpose I will take an address by Dr. T. S. Clouston, Medical Superintendent of the Royal Edinburgh Asylum. The

doctor entitled his lecture "Alcohol and Inhibition." "Inhibition" is the physiological equivalent for "self-control." "Inhibition," he says, "is one of the most important of all the conditions of life, and of all the conditions of nerve working. Without it the whole organism of man would fail. Without its exercise social life would be impossible. Man's power of inhibiting (controlling) his individual desires, must be brought to bear continually in order to preserve the social life of the community. The healthiest and best brains have always the strongest power of inhibition. It is the highest of all the brain's qualities. Keen desires and cravings arise in such brains ; but this power of inhibition checks them ; and *the increase of this power ought to be one of the highest aims of all education worthy of the name.*" But alcohol, the doctor says, always lessens the inhibitory power and the higher creative power. Man has never more, but always less, self-control in proportion to the extent to which he is under the influence of alcohol.

Even if you admit that there are some brains that do more work, and of a better quality, under the influence of a little alcohol than without any, yet the penalty of reaction must in those cases be paid ; and the doctor thought that taking a man's entire life, he would do more and better work on the whole without the aid of alcohol. He would also live longer, and live more happily if he solely depended upon the natural brain stimulus.

The doctor had been speaking of single doses taken in very small quantities ; but even these small doses, he tells us, and his assertion is confirmed by general observation and personal experience, do with many persons diminish the power of self-control ; and he says, there is, to his mind, "no sadder chapter in history than the lives of poets and geniuses whom alcohol first fed, then dominated, and then killed." Alcohol created desires and cravings that became uncontrollable and hurtful, and these, if fully gratified, inevitably led to disease and death. What Nature really craves for is not alcohol, but food, fresh air, and proper conditions of life. With every return of the craving for alcohol, that craving increases in strength, and with it comes a growing feeling of helplessness to resist. This is one of the most dangerous ways in which alcohol lessens "inhibition," or control, because it is often a slow and subtle one. "The quality of inhibition is far too precious an acquisition," the doctor holds, "for any man to run the risk of losing it, if he can help it." And he *can* help it by becoming a total abstainer.

Alcohol lowers the tone of the race, in all sorts of ways, and by all sorts of degenerative processes, commencing with this loss of inhibition, mental and physical. After this degenerative process has been going on for ages, can we wonder that men still crave for the drink ? Can we wonder if the earnestness of Temperance reformers is carried to a point

which seems to some people to be exaggerated? The young man who, having come into a large family property, submitted himself to his physician, and asked for regulations as to diet and regimen which might develop in him the best results of which the human frame was capable, was told that, to meet his wishes, the physician ought to have been called in at least a century earlier. He should have been allowed to advise his great-grandfather, whose fondness for strong beverages was one of the traditions of the family. We most of us have more or less of an evil inheritance of this kind amongst the obstacles that impede our success in life.

But to return to the doctor. He tells us that half the suicides and murders and one-fifth of the insanity in this country are directly or indirectly due to alcohol. It is not merely that the drunkard does all the mischief, for the doctor says that the "soaker" undergoes a kind of "personal and social degradation; a mental, moral, and bodily change for the worse." It is that for ages this degrading and devitalizing influence has been in operation amongst us; and it is surely time that all those who desire that the future of the race should continue to be glorious, as it has been in the past, should band themselves together as one man to check the development of this mighty force of disintegration and destruction. What is really taking place amongst us is that the present age is keeping up

the drinking customs of our forefathers, and that without the measure of fresh air and exercise which to some extent mitigated, in their cases, the injurious effects. Breeders of animals find that occasionally there is what they call a "throw back;" and the newly born resembles not so much its immediate parents, as its more remote progenitors. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children to the third and fourth generations, and the extraordinary prevalence of discomfort and ill health amongst numbers of those who have ample means with which to surround themselves with all the conditions of a healthy existence, should read a lesson to us as to the need of something being done that will strike at the root of this evil. Anyhow it will take a generation or two, with the utmost possible exertion, to make the human race what it ought to be,—what, but for the drink, it might now be. The parents of the present age are bound to avoid perpetuating the shortcomings of themselves and their forefathers, by striving to counteract these debasing constitutional tendencies, and by cultivating the opposite qualities. Many people who are careful about their souls never seem to give a thought to the extent to which the condition of the body is an obstacle to all progress upwards and onwards. How profane it is to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," when you are deliberately undermining and weakening, by the habitual use of this beverage, which has been shown to be a Solvent of

the Will, the power God has given you to resist temptation.

The only perfectly safe course under all circumstances, and for all persons, is to become total abstainers. We do not say that there are not many who are able to drink moderately, and at any rate to keep from open scandal all through their lives; but even this moderate drinking is physically and morally injurious; and the custom of drinking grows upon us so insidiously that total abstinence is the only plan that is *perfectly* safe. Safe for all persons, of all ages, at all times, and in all places. You have no sort of guarantee that *you* are one of the few who can continue moderation without ever falling into excess, or forming perilous habits. Do not therefore run the very awful risk. It is absurd to discuss the possibilities of escaping from danger in the path which you are pursuing, when this other path of perfectly safe abstinence is open to you, and it is the only path that is *absolutely free from risk*.

A lady was sailing out of port on board a steamer. She had wandered about the sands when the tide was out, and had seen a number of very ugly rocks; and now she feared that the ship might perchance strike on one of them, and she became anxious. She went to the captain and told him that as he had a shipload of passengers and a valuable cargo, she presumed that he was familiar with the position of the different rocks. He excited her alarm by

assuring her that he "knew very little about the rocks; but he did know where the deep safe waters were, and he should carefully keep to them." Moderation is trusting to your knowledge of the rocks; but total abstinence is the deep, clear channel, in which alone is absolute and enduring safety. Do not start upon or resume your voyage with the steering gear out of order, and particularly avoid anything that is likely to increase your chances of failure in this important matter. You sow the seed which rain and sunshine are to develop, and the new tree, or plant, or flower, depends for its character upon the character of that *seed*. Soil, sunshine, and rain all have their due effects within certain recognized limitations, but nothing can be done permanently to change the general character of that seed, save by patient perseverance, which oftentimes has to be continued in dealing with successive generations of the plants. Do your individual part in effecting that sort of transformation in your own case, and induce others also to strive after the same great object.

Weeds as a hindrance. — "Just as the twig is bent, the tree is inclined." Evil habits have no chance of taking root, if you do not "encourage them when they are young." Not only do weeds take deep root, but they scatter seeds all around them, so that if left alone year after year, they will gradually fill the place. If you take a garden, as I once did, that has been neglected for years in this

way, it will be years before you can get it into proper condition ; as you have not only to deal with the deep and wide-spreading roots of old weeds, but also with the innumerable seeds that have been scattered from year to year, during the period in which the ground has been neglected. And so it is with humanity. Many a young man who has had unfavorable associations and connections, though it may have been only for a year or two, finds that his habits have become so rooted that, when he comes under better influences, it is a very hard and protracted task for him to counteract the effects of those early evil associations. So in the opposite case. The good influences of parents are often so deeply rooted in him, that it will be very difficult to induce and enable him to change his course, and take up with evil ways.

About landlords as a hindrance. — With regard to material prosperity, thrift is the first and most important help, as we have said. In the cases in which it does the most good, it must be most severe, resolute, and long-continued. A habit is only "the repetition of an act." The first instalment is paid, and periodically that payment is repeated, and repeated so often that thrift becomes quite a habit, and extends from little things to larger ; and in this way it blesses the individual who practises it, and through him his family, and the community in the midst of which he dwells, and the nation at large to which he belongs.

People who are poor, whether by their own want of will-power, or owing to the economic conditions under which they live, are too apt to envy the rich and idle, and to covet their possessions. They rail against what they call "the tyranny of capital," but the money spent by idle people goes into the pockets of those who *produce* the articles of luxury and of necessity which the idle people spend (or "waste" if you like) their money in procuring. What would they say if these people left off spending, and took to competing with them in production? It is the individual, it is yourself, that you must rely upon, and not the State, or any philanthropic or political organization whatsoever.

Landlords may be fairly classed as *hindrances* in this battle of life. There are two sorts of landlords, both of whom should be got rid of as soon as possible. The landlord of the public-house, and the landlord of the house you live in. There are, of course, exceptional cases, in which it might not be so desirable to own the house you live in. But I am speaking of a general rule. I do not advocate anything but moral force in dealing with either of these kinds of landlords; but I want you to exercise as much of that resistant force against landlordism as you can possibly bring to bear, with all the firmness and promptitude and energy of which circumstances may admit.

Get rid of the landlord of the public-house *first*; and that will give you a much better chance of get-

ting rid of the other, and becoming your own landlord. When you have got as far as that, you will find that every upward step makes it less and less difficult to continue climbing higher still. The late Henry Ward Beecher used to say, that there was "only one thing that would justify a young man in getting into debt, and that was borrowing money to buy the house he lived in."

At this point, it is right to make a distinction between the right and the wrong methods of dealing with landlords. Of course, the landlord of the public-house presents only a moral difficulty. You can simply leave off dealing with him for your own advantage and for the advantage of all those over whom your example exercises any influence, directly or indirectly ; and this is a far larger number than you would probably imagine. He has no claim whatever upon you, any more than any other man who has something to sell which you no longer think proper to purchase. When you can school yourself to pass his door without entering it, and can do without his products altogether, the difficulty is solved. Your individual action has become perfectly free and unfettered. You want no legislation. There is no more claim for compensation on his part, either legal or moral, than there would be claim for compensation to a grocer or a butcher with whom the people had left off dealing. A thousand great obstacles are moved out of the way by this simple but conclusive method of solving the difficulty by the action of the individual himself.

In dealing with the landlord of the house you live in you have to face a different set of facts. So long as he asks a reasonable sum for the use of his property, and you agree to pay that sum, the matter is simple enough. But you must not be led away by any of the confiscatory schemes which have been so frequently propounded of late years. It will be a sorry day for this country when the working-man relies upon anything but his own earning power to secure the supply of his material wants. It is for the interest of the working classes themselves, quite as much as for the interest of other classes, that what we call the "rights of property" should be held sacred, and should be fully protected by all the power of the State. This is just as important to the workman with his single pound as it is to the landowner with his estates, or the banker with his millions.

Just consider, for a moment, what would be the consequence of adopting any course in the opposite direction. The moment men found that their savings were no longer securely protected by the State, so that they could have peaceable possession and free enjoyment of all they had managed to accumulate, they would *cease to accumulate*. Habits of industry and thrift would no longer confer any reward upon those who adopted them, and the number of thrifty and industrious individuals would therefore rapidly diminish. The thrifty would not only cease to work themselves, but also to employ others. This would paralyze society, and have a fatal effect upon

the condition of the community at large ; and this is so obvious that we need not extend either argument or illustration in connection with it. Without full and complete protection for our property, whether it is the £5 note saved by the workman, or the million made by the capitalist, we should speedily lapse into the condition of the savage. This applies to inherited property as truly as it does to the earnings of the individual ; for what parent would labor to accumulate for his children the means of more favorably commencing their careers than he himself did his, unless he felt sure that such earnings, bequeathed by him to them, would be secured to them ; and they would be protected in the quiet and undisputed possession and enjoyment of them ? The peaceable enjoyment of property, whether earned or inherited, is one of the first conditions of the solidity and prosperity of any community. Every attempt to loosen these bonds must tell adversely, exactly in proportion to the success of such attempt, upon all thrift, industry, and general prosperity. What, for instance, could be the use of urging a man to cultivate his will-power, to undergo a trying process of self-denial, and to live a life of thrift and industry, if he had any doubts as to his being protected in the full and peaceable enjoyment of the results that might follow that self-denial, and thrift, and labor ? Without full protection for property, society would completely and rapidly fall to pieces. It may be that the idle classes spend or waste £62,-

ooo,ooo, but the working classes spend £80,000,000 in drink, and if they would only take that obstacle out of the way they would not want aid from anybody, and would have very little to complain about.

Unsuspected hindrances.— Sometimes, however clever you may think yourself to be, you do not clearly see what the hindrance really is, even though it may be one absolutely of your own creation. There was a manufacturer in the North, some time ago, who prided himself upon his *cuteness*. He had fair reason for doing so, as he had become the head of the firm in which, thirty years ago, he began life as an errand boy at five shillings a week. He found that the key of his safe went harder and harder every day; and at last, one morning, he could not get it open at all. It was past nine o'clock, and he knew not what to do. His imagination was somewhat lively, and nothing seemed so probable as that the safe had been tampered with, and perhaps the money and the securities which he now wanted to take out for a certain business transaction had been removed. He said nothing in the warehouse, but went to the railway-station, and telegraphed to the manufacturer of the safe in London, most earnestly requesting him to send down a competent man by the very next train, one who would be capable of opening the safe by force, if that was found necessary. For over four hours he walked about the place in an unenviable state of mind; and at last the man from London

arrived. He took him straight to the safe. He could not make the key open the lock, and he tried the barrel of the key with a sharp pointed instrument. But the key had been rammed into the lock so hard, and so often, that whatever was at the bottom of it showed no signs of yielding. At length the man extracted a little bit of fluff; and, thus encouraged, he proceeded with redoubled vigor, and at last got the key clear, and easily opened the safe. The contents were intact. The perplexed manufacturer expressed his satisfaction, and asked for the account, which, including travelling expenses, came to a little over £4. Taking a five-pound note from the safe, he handed it to the man, telling him to receipt the bill and keep the difference for himself, on condition that he left the place by the very next train, and that he did not breathe a syllable to any one as to what had taken place; "for," said he, "if any of the fellows down here only knew that I had got a man all the way down from London only to take the fluff out of my key, they would laugh at me for the rest of my lifetime!"

You may fancy that certain difficulties are quite insuperable, but, after all, the obstacle in your way may be only the "fluff in the key." What is the "fluff" in *your* key? Is it drink, or want of thrift, or want of tact, or want of industry, or what? This is a point to which your more serious attention should be directed. The result may show you that the real obstacle is but a trifle after all, that it has

been created by yourself, and that it is well within your own powers of removal.

What is the "fluff in your key" at the home? Is it want of amiability? Is it want of self-denial for the sake of those who are dependent on you? Is it a persistent ignoring of the fact that the family life wants attentive cultivation, if real happiness is to be secured, and surely suffers from neglect and ill-treatment just as a tender plant suffers from want of water, want of sunshine, and the lack of other ordinary care? This is an aspect of the subject, of which careful consideration would produce good results for all who honestly undertake it, and persistently carry out the lessons which such an inquiry cannot fail to teach them. Is there any "fluff in the key" at the office, shop, or warehouse; in the social, political, or religious associations which you may have formed? It will conduce very much to your personal comfort, and to your chances of success, if you patiently inquire into these matters; and act prudently and promptly on the results which such inquiries place before you. Get rid of the hindrance by all means, even if you have to use very sharp measures.

CHAPTER IX.

DULNESS IN YOUTH AND EVEN EXTREME POVERTY DO
NOT PREVENT SUCCESS.

It may be that youthful prodigies often disappoint their admirers, and turn out 'dull' when they come to be adults; but there is ample compensation for occasional failures in this sphere, in the very numerous cases in which *dull boys* have become *great men*, and have attained eminence in the particular walk of life which they may have adopted, whether it be military, mercantile, naval, legal, medical, or political. Perhaps these dull boys may have been moved by the considerations that are said to actuate some of the fair sex. When they discover that they are not naturally beautiful, they set themselves to make up for their deficiency by being so amiable, and so attractive in other respects, that their defective beauty is not observed, or, at any rate, not so much observed, as it otherwise would have been. Probably, most of us have met with cases of this kind.

It is astonishing how much can be accomplished, when once you make up your mind to do it. You may not do *all* you plan to do. You may meet with many failures and discouragements. You may

find obstacles in *your* surroundings that others may not have to contend against. But, if you resolutely persevere, you will accomplish far more than seemed probable, or even possible, at the outset of your career.

It is equally remarkable how very small a thing may prove to be the turning-point in life. We are told that Newton was a dull boy. He was nearly at the bottom of his class in school. But one day a boy above him kicked him. They fought when they got outside, and Newton was victorious. When they returned to school, Newton was resolved to beat him there also; he persevered, and he presently reached the top of his class. Isaac Barrow was described "as idle and pugnacious," and it seems as if many of these pugnacious boys, when they turn their energy into the right channel, meet with singular success. The very pugnacity is proof of force of character which may be usefully employed, if rightly directed. Adam Clarke, as a boy, was described as "a dunce," but every one knows that he attained a wonderful position as a commentator on the Sacred Scriptures, and acquired a precise and critical familiarity with the Hebrew, Latin, Greek, and other languages. The celebrated Dr. Chalmers was actually dismissed from one school because he was "stupid and mischievous." The great Sheridan, when a boy, was described as "an incorrigible dunce." Goldsmith said he was "a plant that flowered late." Napoleon, Wellington, Ulysses

Grant, and Stonewall Jackson, must be added to the list of "dull boys," who gave no promise in youth of future greatness ; but they had energy and perseverance, and attained to splendid positions in after-life. Dulness in youth, therefore, is no cause for despondency on the part of parents and guardians. Let them see that what energy is exhibited is duly cultivated and carefully directed into the right channels.

Poverty and obscurity of origin may impede, but cannot long arrest, the upward and onward march of the lad whose will-power is called into full exercise. Cardinal Wolsey, Daniel Defoe (author of "Robinson Crusoe") and Kirke White, were the sons of butchers. Livingstone, the missionary traveller, was a weaver. So was W. J. Fox, M. P. for Oldham, and one of the most effective orators of his time. Sir Humphry Davy said, "What I am I have made myself, and I say this without vanity, and in pure simplicity of heart." W. J. Fox was never ashamed to refer to the period when he was a weaver boy at Norwich, and the present writer has often heard the late Mr. Lindsay, M. P. for Sutherland, refer with pride in the House of Commons to his lowly origin as a cabin boy. From that he rose to be captain, and afterwards became M. P., and a very wealthy shipowner. Poverty is therefore not an insuperable obstacle, but on the contrary, seems often to act rather as a potential stimulus on minds of a certain class.

Disraeli, in his first speech in the House of Commons, was laughed at for his rhetorical style, but he told them that "the day would come when they *should* hear him," and it did come. Arkwright was fifty years of age when he began to learn the English Grammar and to improve his writing and his spelling. The history of modern invention supplies an abundance of illustrations of what can be done by this exercise of will-power, and how impotent are the ordinary adverse circumstances of life to prevent a man who cultivates it from attaining the object of his ambition. It is almost half a century ago since I knew a "higgler" in Dorsetshire, one of those men who go round the country with a horse and cart, buy eggs, poultry, etc., from the cottagers and farmers, and sell the same on market-day in the county town. He was a great tippler, and lost many a profitable transaction owing to his drinking habits. He was on the point of having his horse and cart seized for rent, and his home thus broken up and his business destroyed, when he was taken in hand by a Methodist minister, who was a total abstainer even in those far-off days. He persuaded the poor victim to take the pledge as the first step towards reformation. He did so, and the time he used to spend at the public-house he now spent in learning to read. He had the will-power, and he brought it into vigorous operation. He could not be persuaded to learn to write the ordinary current hand; but, as soon as he began to

learn to read, he copied the letters from the books, and taught himself in that way. He only used capitals, and his letters and books of account were kept in that way, and looked very much like the productions of the first typewriters, which used capitals only. He wrote them very beautifully. It looked like the work of a clever schoolboy, instead of the production of a horny-handed son of toil, who had taught himself in his fiftieth year. But he persevered till not only were all his debts discharged, but he bought himself a new and better horse and cart, and purchased the house he lived in, with nearly an acre of ground attached to it. After some years I lost sight of him, but I have no doubt he continued steadfast to the end. Many anecdotes were told about his "decision of character," and the trouble he took (though, alas ! in vain) to induce a grown-up son to enter on the same sensible course of personal reformation. He was disheartened at his want of success with the son, who was perpetually making demands on his hard earnings. One day the son wanted a new saddle, but had not the money to buy one with, and he came upon his father, who refused to advance any more to the idle spendthrift. At last, however, he resolved to try him. "Thee couldst not keep thy mind to one thing for three seconds at a time."

"Yes, I could," said the son.

"I'll try thee," said the father ; "and if thee canst say the Lord's Prayer through, without thinking of

something else, I'll give thee the saddle thee wants."

The young man commenced: "Our Father, which art in Heaven"—and then he stopped short and said, "Feyther, thee'll give us the bridle too?"

Of course, after that, he got neither saddle nor bridle. It was hopeless to think that a young man who had so little power of fixing his mind, even for a few moments, on the subject before him would attain success in his business, whatever it might be. Whether or not the old man ever gave him another chance, I never heard. He was fifty years of age when he began to turn over a new leaf, so that "it is never too late to mend." I have given cases of the results of will-power in adults as well as in youths; and it seems as potent in the one case as in the other.

Take as a further illustration the sorrows and sufferings of Palissy the Potter, who persevered for sixteen years before he completed the process that enabled him to turn out those exquisite productions that handed his name down to an admiring posterity. He reduced himself and his family to absolute want. He burned not only his fuel, but his furniture; and, at last, to keep his furnace going for his experiments, he burned every stick of the fence that surrounded his premises. His wife and his friends thought that he was mad until he succeeded.

Once more, let me say, this is an *individual work*,

which a man or a boy must do *for* himself and *by* himself. You may help or hinder, but you can never do the work for another, nor can you, by any means, prevent him from doing it for himself, when once he is firmly resolved upon it. It is an individual work, as I say ; but, still, as the poet tells us :

“ If everyone would see
To his own reformation,
How very easily
You might reform a nation ! ”

A nation can only have the qualities of the individuals who compose it, be they good, bad, or indifferent. Hence the importance of educating the individual, and of promoting individual comfort, individual progress, individual cultivation of the will-power.

CHAPTER X.

THE WILL-POWER AS A SOURCE OF HAPPINESS.

"O Happiness ! our being's end and aim !" — POPE.

WE shall not attempt to give a general definition of what *happiness* is, for that which would make one person rejoice would make another sad, while a third might be perfectly indifferent to the whole matter. Men get their so-called "pleasures" from a great variety of sources, but a modern cynical philosopher expressed his conviction that "Life would be all very well were it not for its pleasures." Whatever may be the particular sources of our personal happiness, we are anxious to be able to command these sources ; and, in order to do this, some persons look to indulgent parents, others to gifts or to legacies or to luck ; but the vast mass of the people have to toil for the attainment of their happiness, just as they have to toil in order to attain any other object in life. Will-power here, as elsewhere, is an essential condition of success ; therefore that power will have to be cultivated by those who desire to succeed, and they will attain success in securing happiness just in proportion to the extent to which they do cultivate their will-power.

"To be good is to be happy," says the ancient copy-book line ; and, no doubt, the highest form of felicity of which the human being is capable results from "being good and doing good." But good people are happy in a different way from the giddy multitude. Their conquests over sin and self, over indolence and listlessness, give them a higher and purer form of felicity than is possible to those whose pleasures consist solely or chiefly in eating and drinking, and in the indulgence of animal propensities. These lower enjoyments injure us, and soon begin to pall upon us, whereas the higher forms will last till death, and, unless our conceptions of a future state are entirely erroneous, throughout eternity itself.

"Happiness is a duty." Sir John Lubbock in an interesting little book has a chapter on "The duty of happiness, and the happiness of duty." Happiness is from within, and is but little dependent upon external circumstances. The due discharge of our duty — and progress is the duty of every living being, whether he be master or servant, rich or poor, young or old, learned or illiterate — is in itself a source of happiness. Pleasure comes from the calm conviction that we are doing what we know to be right. A Yorkshireman defined happiness as "A bit more than what we've got." To get this "bit more" we have to build up the will-power by careful and persistent exercise and perseverance, just as in our other attempts to secure material success.

We have said that "happiness comes from within," and if we duly cultivate our higher and holier aspirations, we shall find in this way a source of happiness that is both pure and permanent. Those who pursue merely animal pleasures, are seeking what to them *seems* happiness, but they often involve such a violation of natural and Divine law, that nature itself will, sooner or later, punish them by shortening their days, and making the very pleasures they gain become a source of discomfort, injury, and danger to themselves, and even to the community in the midst of which they dwell. In the pursuit of a "bit more," thousands are fully convinced that if they get it, their happiness will be secured. They have not will-power enough to keep down discontent with what they have, and they surely find from experience that the "bit more," when they have secured it, proves in no sense satisfying. They want a "bit more" still. Many men have attained happiness by the cultivation of a "contented mind," which is described as "a continual feast." One man may be able to increase his income and thus become possessed of things which he believes, and perhaps finds, essential to his happiness, while another may not be able to increase his income, but may cultivate the will-power so that he can diminish his desires, and make things meet at that end. That is often an easier, and always a quicker, mode of attaining the object; and if the moderation of your desires is carried on simultaneously with the industry and perseverance

that are needed to increase your means, you will have arrived at the most satisfactory course that can possibly be pursued. It is quite certain that "more money" will not, alone and invariably, or even generally, secure happiness. Many have succeeded in getting wealth, but without that thankfulness and contentment and helpfulness for others, that ought always to accompany it; and such men really are no happier than they were before. Very likely such a man sets himself to argue that "life is not worth living," whereas the fault in life lies entirely *with himself*. Where we find a want of gratitude for the mercies we enjoy, there is generally also a want of sympathy with those who have not been so successful as we have been; and to these failings we may fairly attribute that want of happiness of which men often complain. Instead of being grateful for the mercies we enjoy, we still hanker after that "bit more" — more money, more influence, social, religious, or political. We are not content to keep on the old safe road of gratitude for mercies already received, and willingness patiently and perseveringly to labor on toward the attainment of what seems further desirable. An honest examination of our position would convince us that the chief, if not the sole, causes of our unhappiness are entirely home-made. Not "Manufactured in Germany," or elsewhere, but in our own minds. A man might just as reasonably worry himself about the spots on the sun, and neglect to bask in its beams and to rejoice in

the health that it imparts to the human frame, the fertility that it gives to the soil, the growth that it promotes in both plant and animal, and the pleasure that it affords to all sentient beings. The Italians have a saying that "we cannot all live on the piazza, but we may all feel the sun;" and, as we have seen, many who merely "feel the sun," are often happier than the most resplendent loungeur on the piazza. It has come to be a reproach that a man is "thankful for small mercies," but are any providential mercies small? We think not. This saying was thrown at a man who was asked what made him so radiant on a very dull day. He replied "that he was so thankful to Providence for being able for the first time, after suffering for two years from rheumatism, to be able to stand upright without any pain." "You are indeed thankful for small mercies," sneered his friend. "Small mercies!" ejaculated the quondam sufferer, "if you had gone through a tithe of what I have suffered during the past two years, you would not call it a 'small mercy' to be able, once more, even to stand upright with comfort." A similar case was that of the man who after the (what he called) "temperate" use of alcoholic drinks for many years, decided to abstain altogether, and set himself to the elimination of the poison from his system. When he had succeeded to a considerable extent, though probably not fully in the strict medical sense of the word, he was asked one day, "what made him so jolly. Had he taken

once more to a drop of something comforting?" "No!" he replied, "now that I have left off drinking intoxicating beverages, I never suffer at all from that dreadful *thirst* which gives folks so much anxiety; and I feel, in the mere act and fact of living, a pleasure more delicious than alcohol ever gave me, even under the most favorable circumstances." Many go on, from year to year, enjoying good health, while thousands of the same age are daily dying around them, without ever (or at any rate without often) feeling at all grateful for the blessings of health and strength. They are *small mercies*, are they? We do not believe in that view of the matter. They do not seem "small mercies" to those who experience them. If we, by the exercise of the will-power, cultivate this thankfulness and usefulness, and enjoy the cheerfulness naturally produced thereby, we shall cease to have any more home-made troubles, and possess more spirit to pull through those real and inevitable vexations from which the luckiest of us are not wholly free. We shall feel a calm satisfaction, to which at present we are perfect strangers. There is happily "a providence that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will," but still we must never forget the necessity of continual, energetic and persevering "rough-hewing" on our part; and recollect that Providence will not do for us any part of that work which it has given us the power, and imposed upon us the duty, of doing for ourselves. We can not only do a great

deal of this "rough-hewing" for ourselves, but it is part of our duty to do what we can in helping others at their "rough-hewing." In this way, and in the fulfilment of this duty to others, we may find another prolific source of the highest and holiest form of happiness, another proof that "duty is happiness, and happiness is duty." It is not because one man toils with his brain, and another with his hands, that the former is happier than the latter. His occupation has after all but little to do with a man's happiness; it is the spirit in which his work is conducted, whatever the work may be, that produces happiness and imparts dignity to the calling. The day is fast approaching when manual labor will once more be respected as highly as any other form of toil; and the question will be the *character of the man*, and not the kind of work in which he is engaged. The only class that will then be thoroughly pitied, if not despised by the rest of the community, will be those who, having no need to work for their daily subsistence, yet do not employ their talents and time, and the means with which they are blessed, in useful services for the benefit of their less fortunate brethren. The necessity of toiling for our daily bread is a "training" that is valuable as conducive to happiness, since we thereby escape all the worries and vexations of those whom we think are better off than ourselves, because they have their bread-and-butter provided for them. Their chief labor and anxiety are given to that

painful operation, which they frankly call "killing time." It may, therefore, be said that the moderately contented laborer on the whole is a far happier individual.

By this self-controlling will-power we may make a wondrous transformation at our firesides, at the shop, the warehouse, the mill, the coal-pit, or wherever we may be engaged. Common-sense, self-denial, and cheerfulness will do wonders in this way, and change our jarring associations so that our homes may become a comparative paradise ; and in the endeavor to make others happy we shall take the best and surest way of securing our own personal happiness. Marriage will be no longer "a failure ;" and the relations between Capital and Labor will not be, as now, the source of so much tragic suffering. The little boy who was tending his invalid brother showed that he had found, perhaps unconsciously, the real secret of happiness. He explained how it was that they were both so joyous under apparently impossible conditions. He said, "I makes Jim happy and he laughs, and that makes me happy and I laugh." Silver and gold are not the only or the best means of enabling us to do good in making ourselves happy by making others happy. There are a thousand little opportunities for sympathetic words and kindly acts which present themselves to us in daily life ; but only those who practise self-denial and are on the look-out for them are likely to take advantage of them.

Another reason why the will-power is a source of happiness is, that it is an individual and inalienable possession. The will-power is strictly in the possession of the individual. Its nature and character may have been determined by heredity and environment though cultivated by the individual, but it now belongs strictly and exclusively to the possessor, and is under his exclusive management and control, and he alone is responsible for its exercise and development. Even a child likes a toy all the better when he can say, "It is all my own." Will-power is a valuable force which the man himself directs, but the good or evil which its exercise produces, though chiefly enjoyed by the individual himself, are more or less shared by the family, and by the community in which he dwells. Riches may "take to themselves wings, and flee away;" he may be deprived of his lands, or goods, or of any other thing that he possesses, even his fair name may be taken from him by groundless slanders, and persistent misrepresentation, but his will-power cannot be alienated or destroyed, or even weakened, without his full knowledge and consent. In other matters he is dependent upon public opinion and legislative enactments for the possibilities of the present and the hopes of the future; but as to this precious possession, he is entirely his own master. He may be rudely buffeted by adverse circumstances; he may have to encounter fierce and ceaseless competition; but, rightly regarded, these things will only serve to

strengthen, and not to weaken, the will-power. In his business he may find the work of years swept away by the sudden diminution, or perhaps complete cessation, of the demand for the goods which he produces, owing, it may be, to some mistaken legislation of our own Parliament, or to the wilful obstinacy of other persons engaged in the same trade, or to some alteration in the tariffs of some foreign country. But none of these things affect unfavorably the will-power. On the contrary, they develop it by setting the man's resolution and ingenuity to work upon the best modes of adapting himself to these alterations in his environment which he has been personally unable to control. These external circumstances affect whole classes of the people, but he is left in the individual possession of this grand force, which will help him to make personal progress ; while the class to which he belongs is encouraged by the influence of his personal example to make similar efforts for their own advancement. Other men may have to wait for new laws, for fiscal changes, for treaties of commerce, for brighter days, while he plods steadily on, picking up every unconsidered trifle that may help him, and leaving no stone unturned in building up his own prosperity. He "keeps pegging away," as the late President Lincoln used to put it.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

How the necessity for this conflict first came about is one of those questions with respect to which much learned and mysterious nonsense has been written, from age to age. But, I say it without irreverence, if you only look the matter calmly and intelligently in the face the mists of the ages gradually disappear. 'T was Man's first disobedience that caused the introduction of death and all our woes, including the necessity of earning our bread "by the sweat of our face," and of sustaining this perpetual conflict with the evil that is within and all around us; and it is to the continuance of that disobedience that we owe the continuance of evil. Evil abounds in proportion to the disobedience, and diminishes in proportion to our success in self-conquest. A merciful Providence has enabled us to turn even the evil that is in the world to our practical advantage, by cultivating our powers of resistance, and thereby strengthening us for every conflict in the battle of life.

We see what crude notions extensively prevail on this and many other important points by the revela-

tions of modern thought arising out of the newspaper controversy, as to Christianity being "played out." But all the honest portion of those who wrote so flipantly about Christianity might have secured a much wider and juster notion of what really was Christ's real character and mission, if they had taken the Revised Version of the New Testament, and quietly read again the Gospels through. This would have given them so far as they could free themselves from traditional misconceptions, a grand, broad, and glorious view of His character and mission, which would have spared the paper in question a great deal of twaddle, and pious readers a great deal of pain. The fundamental doctrine taught by Christ was just this duty of "self-conquest," which is absolutely necessary in order to achieve success in the Christian life. What the world needs is simply to *come back* to Christ and His plain teaching, and to get rid of all the innumerable incrustations by means of which the ignorance of ages, and the imperfect conceptions even of the churches themselves, have obscured and distorted that teaching. Suffering and conflict train us to patience and perseverance, and strengthen us for the fight in which we are engaged. The necessity for keeping up the battle cultivates all the powers which we possess, and often develops powers the very existence of which had not even been suspected. It is like the training of the athlete. How often we see a man placed in a position of difficulty, and wonder how he will get on. We

sometimes uncharitably make up our minds that we shall see him fail, either partially or completely ; and yet the apparently unlikely man often " makes a great hit." His indomitable will, his tact, and his intelligent perseverance in training himself, have enabled him to overcome what to us may have seemed incurable defects and insuperable obstacles. This is simply will-power, cultivated by constant exercise, and sustained by continuity of effort, developing qualities that enable, as we have said, the errand-boy to become the head of the firm. Of course what we call " fortunate opportunities " come to some, but present themselves less frequently to others, and these have therefore not so many chances of " taking the tide at the flood " which leads them on to fortune. But we must not fritter away our existence, like Micawber, in " waiting for something to turn up." We must *turn it up for ourselves*.

This constant exercise of will-power will develop other useful qualities which may combine to command success. The athlete does not regret the training that enables him to win the race. He may bemoan his want of " staying power," and other defects ; but he knows that proper preliminary preparation will sooner or later bring out the utmost of which he is physically capable. Self-denial is probably not more agreeable to him than it is to the general average of mankind ; but he clearly sees that the task must be taken up, if he is to have a chance in the competition. So he sets about it cheerfully, or, at any

rate, with as much cheerfulness as he can muster. His difficulties diminish daily, in proportion to the extent to which the training is persisted in, until he reaches the utmost excellence of which his physical frame is capable. This is a great law of nature. We have, in a sense, "free will," and are therefore naturally responsible for its exercise. Success and failure are both before us ; and no matter what our present position may be, the future is, to a far larger extent than most people are inclined to believe, in our own hands. In proportion as we cultivate this will-power, and direct it into right channels, will be our success in life. There may be some obstacles that we are unable to more than partially overcome ; though parents and friends have removed similar obstructions from the paths of others. There may be evils and difficulties within and around us from which others have been entirely freed, though we have been able, only partially, to counteract them ; but, just in proportion to the extent that we do strengthen and exercise the will-power needed to counteract them will be the extent of our success in doing so.

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT WILL HELP US IN THIS CULTIVATION OF WILL-POWER.

THRIFT is a help to material prosperity, just as *drink* is a hindrance to that and all other desirable objects. Money enables you to enjoy so many comforts, and to do so many things that you could otherwise never hope to do, that the advantages of systematic thrift, even by those who are too invertebrate to practise the requisite self-denial themselves, are more clearly seen perhaps than the practical advantages of many other forms of self-conquest; but the particular class which needs thrift most, has, from the very nature of things, to bring to bear the largest amount of severe, systematic, continuous, and we may say often painful, self-denial, in order to carry out the idea. Though things are still far enough in this respect from what they ought to be, no one who takes a real interest in the prosperity of the working classes of this country can fail to see, with the liveliest emotions of satisfaction, the amount of self-denial which they are now practising, and are increasing more and more every year, as is evidenced by the sums which they have screwed out of their hard earnings, and deposited in such insti-

tutions as savings banks, friendly societies, and above all industrial insurance companies.

The first step for the poor to take is to deny themselves to the extent of a few pence a week, so as to avoid the indignity of a pauper's grave for themselves and family. Thrift, sobriety and industry not only make this gradually easier — as the *act* of saving is repeated it becomes a habit — but these qualities help men up to a higher point, and then they begin to provide for old age. Of late years a vast number of working men are finding also the means of buying the house they live in by paying instalments, spread over a lengthened period, so that they do not amount in any one year to more than the rent of that year, which secures the freehold for the father in, say, thirty years ; or for his survivors, at any previous period, without further payments, whenever the father may die. Self-denial is required here again, not so much to make any extra saving, since the man and his family must live and pay rent somewhere, as to meet the continuous compulsory payments. These payments, where the property is purchased at a reasonable rate, and the society which makes the advance will take care that such is the case, will seldom, if ever, amount to more than the rent. In order to make the instalments small enough, the period of repayment is necessarily long. This of itself may be irksome, but it is a good "training" for a man, as it cultivates a regular systematic continuance of "thrift."

The task gradually becomes easy, as compared with what it seemed to be at the outset. There is a mighty difference between the man who sees nothing but the workhouse and a pauper's grave in the future, and another man who lives in a house that already belongs to him, subject to the completion of his payments. The freehold will then become absolutely his, free from any future payment, at the end of the period agreed upon, while, should he die before that day arrives, the freehold will pass at his death absolutely and at once, and equally without any further payment, to his family, so that he will have left them at least "a roof to cover them," and this without paying more than his mates have been paying all the time as rent for premises in which they have not now any proprietorship whatsoever, nor ever will have if they pay rent for another forty years, any more than they have in the Hall which is inhabited by the squire.

Those who are "better off," as it is called, are able to avoid much of this delay in connection with the purchase of their houses ; they can pay larger instalments, and therefore over shorter periods, and they have less difficulty in continuing to make the payments, and by means of ordinary life-assurance they can make even more adequate provision than this for their families at death, with a certainty and promptitude that are attainable by no other means. The extent to which such provision may be made is limited only by the means of paying the very modest premiums by which

these beneficial results are secured. THRIFT, to enable this kind of thing to be done, requires SELF-DENIAL, and this is the first and greatest "help," just as drink is the first and greatest "hindrance."

You must do this work for yourself and by yourself. All that the most enlightened philanthropist can do for you is to set you in the right path, and help you to remove, as far as possible, any hindrances out of your way. But your "will-power" must be ever present at the bottom of it, or else nothing will go right. You have the will-power, you must exercise and thereby strengthen it, and when you clearly see the result of the process you will get a glimpse of the infinite wisdom which imposed the necessity of this "training" upon us. Other things being equal, compare the sturdy, industrious, intelligent being who has been "the architect of his own fortune," with the insipid, sometimes practically useless, and often injurious member of society who was "born with a silver spoon in his mouth." Many of the opulent classes, it is true, inherit or acquire sufficient force of character to attain, and do attain, partly, no doubt, by personal merit and exertion, powerfully aided by unearned wealth, high positions in whatever walk of life they may select. Against such competitors in the battle of life, the poor man, with few opportunities and no money, is severely handicapped, no doubt; but that does not prevent the handicapped man, every now and then, from outstripping his

more favored competitor in the race. Some people long for what they call a "comfortable position" (by which they generally mean "comfortable" from a pecuniary point of view), and yet are incapable of the requisite amount of self-denial for the attainment of it. Never be disheartened by your failures, but after every fall get upon your feet again as soon as you can, and take every care to avoid at least similar causes of failure in the future. You must not be like a poor victim of drink who once told me that he passed half a dozen public houses, and then "treated resolution" at the seventh. Pass the seventh, and all the rest. The power to deny yourself in this and other matters with respect to which self-denial is desirable will surely, though gradually, be attained if you are really in earnest, and continue honestly persevering in your efforts. A man was being solicited to provide for his wife and family by means of life-assurance, but he excused himself, saying: "The Lord will provide." "Yes," said his wife, "the Lord does provide; He provides a workhouse for men of your sort." The wife was justified. You have no right to rely on Providence unless you do the part allotted to you, and "use the means" placed at your disposal. It is mere profanity to do so. Cromwell put the same idea roughly, but very forcibly, when he said: "Trust in God, but keep your powder dry!" The individual always has his part to perform, however humble it may be.

CHAPTER XIII.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

SELF-CONQUEST is no doubt an arduous undertaking, but its final issue is secured to those who pursue it vigorously, intelligently, and perseveringly. The extent of the victory is largely dependent on the measure of energy, intelligence, and persistency with which you sustain your part. No doubt the fierceness and duration of the fight deters many from entering upon it at all. But it is far easier to walk on a well-trodden path than to climb a hill where no predecessor has done anything toward smoothing down the difficulties. It will therefore be worth while for those who desire to succeed to consider such lessons as may be learned from the practical experience of those who have gone before them. We have "a cloud of witnesses" to the certainty of success on the part of those who intelligently and perseveringly pursue the course on which we are trying to persuade you to enter, though, probably, it was in many of these cases the unconscious exercise of will-power rather than any deliberate development of it by exercise.

I do not know why I should take the example of Cobbett first, except that I have just been reading,

once more, his "Advice to Young Men." That "advice" is thoroughly practical and sound,—a little harsh, perhaps, to the ear of the present day, but it is very instructive and scarcely ever open to objection. His plain, earnest common-sense may seem rough to the refinement of the present age, but for those who have rough work to do it is just the thing. It is as much more valuable to them than the rubbish which is now so widely circulated, as his homespun garments were (for working purposes) superior to the most glossy broadcloth of his betters who despised him. Cobbett was the son of a farmer, but the cultivation of the soil was not much to his taste. His subsequent duties as a copying clerk were even still more discordant to him, and he enlisted as a private soldier. Many thousands of farmers' sons have gone thus far along the same road. But Cobbett did not succumb to the vicious influences by which he found himself surrounded in the barrack-room. On the contrary, antagonism seems to have acted in his case as a stimulus. He began as a private soldier, and determined to improve his position. Everything was against him. He was without money, without friends, and without helpers. He had an income of sixpence a day, and there were numbers of young men about him who were entirely out of sympathy with his aspirations for an improved position in life. He sat on the edge of his bed to pursue his studies; his knapsack held all his

library ; a bit of board served for his desk and writing-table. In the long winter evenings he had often only the light of the fire to work by, and he denied himself some actual necessities of life in order to buy pens, ink, and paper. The private soldiers of those days were not cared for as the private soldiers of the present day are. Even out of the sixpence a day there were then deductions made for things which they were compelled to purchase, and these left at their own free disposal only about twopence a week. Cobbett's self-denial was, therefore, very real, and had a persistency about it that finely illustrates his power of self-control and of endurance. He was a tall, stalwart young man, and the food provided for him was not enough to sustain adequately his powerful frame. The poor fellow has left on record a touching picture of his distress when, one day, having put by a halfpenny to purchase a red herring for his breakfast, he found, just as he was going to bed, that he had lost it. He was so hungry that he was "hardly able to endure life." There is a touch of nature here that will find an echo in every right-minded man's heart. He could not find his only halfpenny ; he buried his head beneath the sheets and wept like a child ; yet he did not relax his efforts. He mastered his task of self-education so effectually that he afterwards became the author of an excellent English Grammar and also a Grammar of the French lan-

guage. One point is important just here. While pursuing his studies with a view to personal advancement, he never neglected his duties as a soldier, but discharged them with such fidelity and zeal that, at the early age of nineteen, he was made sergeant-major of an old regiment, and was put to do some of the duties of those who ranked above him, so that it is evident he won favor and confidence. He urges his readers to attend, *first*, to the duties of their position, whatever it may be, and to study, *first*, matters relating to their own country, its condition and history, and not to imitate those who "know a lot about the Chinese and Hindoos, and very little about Kent or Cornwall." We cannot doubt that it is sound policy to attend, first, to the occupation by which you gain a livelihood and attain excellence in that. Other studies are properly regarded as extras. Do not look upon your present position as the highest point you care to attain, but nevertheless attend to your own work and your own country first. Let the rest follow afterwards. "Excellence in your own calling," is therefore, as Cobbett puts it, "the first thing to be aimed at."

Cobbett did not, in his early youth, like farming, but he did his duty in the army, married at twenty-six, and at twenty-eight adopted literature as a regular profession. I have not space in which to give even the titles of his many excellent productions; but I may say that, in spite of his original dislike to

farming, he showed, in his "Cottage Economy," that he had, at some time managed to acquaint himself with the leading facts necessary to be known by a cultivator of the soil ; and, if our laboring classes had been made more widely familiar with that excellent little work, they would, tens of thousands of them, have led happier and more useful lives, and we should not have had so much complaining in our lanes and streets about agricultural distress.

Cobbett returned to this country, continued his journalistic career, and was elected to the first Reformed Parliament as M.P. for Oldham. He died at the age of seventy-three, honored and respected by all sorts and conditions of men, though, as he was very far in advance of the opinions of the majority in that day, he also made enemies. His "Advice to Young Men" ought to be read by every one who seeks to enter upon that sublime task of self-conquest to which it is the object of this little book to invite them, and of which Cobbett himself was a very striking illustration.

Such books as the Rev. Dr. Anderson's "Self-Made Men" abound in illustrations of what the will-power, if duly cultivated, will enable a man to do in the way of rising to a good position in life, even from beginnings of the most unpromising description. It is true that in most of these cases the power seems to have been the following out of a powerful natural impulse, rather than the pursuit of a calculated and predetermined course of policy.

What we contend for is, that thousands who are at present possessed of a weaker will-power than is necessary for the ensuring of success in such times as these, nevertheless may so strengthen and increase their power by the careful and continuous exercise of it, that the success may yet be reached even by them.

But to Dr. Anderson's examples. His illustrations are John Bunyan, Edward Baines, Hugh Miller, and John Kitto; and though the book was written over thirty years ago, it would be difficult even now to select four examples more striking of what a cultivated and sanctified will-power can accomplish. John Bunyan, the Bedford tinker, has made his mark on the literature of this country, and such a mark as has led the most distinguished ornaments of the church and of the literature of this country, and in fact, of all countries, to bestow upon the humble author of "Pilgrim's Progress" and the "Holy War" the highest encomiums that they were capable of uttering.

He was born near Bedford in 1628. His father was a tinker, and John was brought up to the same occupation. He was indebted to a local charity for such education as he possessed. He enlisted when he was seventeen; and although matters have somewhat improved since those days, the army did not provide the sort of environment which was likely to produce the results that distinguished his after-career. John was probably not so black as he was

painted, but he was no doubt a coarse, sensual, and profane person ; not, one would think, likely to attract a good wife, and yet he did succeed in marrying a virtuous and excellent woman. She was, however, poor. They had not so much as a dish or a spoon between them, as he confesses. But she was of a respectable, godly family, and seems to have exercised a wholesome influence upon her husband. Marrying so young, and in such poverty, was a dangerous experiment, but it turned out satisfactorily in this particular instance.

Bunyan was standing at a neighbor's window one day, cursing and swearing with such vehemence that he was actually reproached by an abandoned woman on the street, who told him that he was " enough to corrupt the entire youth of the place." This reproof made a deep impression on him, and led to a complete change of life. At twenty-six he was admitted as a member of a Nonconformist church, and soon began preaching. His powerful mind and his real earnestness made him an effective speaker, and he was soon cast into prison for his public utterances. He had read the Bible, and his other reading had apparently consisted chiefly of "The Practice of Piety" and "The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven," two Puritanical works which his wife brought him at their marriage. But a man who reads and thoroughly digests a few good books is better equipped for life's conflict than the man who reads more extensively, but less thoughtfully, diluting his style

with the lighter literature of his day. Kossuth, the great Hungarian patriot, assured me that there was nothing at all remarkable about his (Kossuth's) wonderful command of the English language, on which I had congratulated him, and the reason he gave was that, "for many years, he had carefully studied the Authorized Version of the Bible, and the works of William Shakespeare." So an editor, a celebrity of forty years ago, accounted to me for his ponderosity of style and copiousness of resources by the fact that, during his youth and early manhood, his reading was chiefly confined to a complete set of the "Edinburgh Review," to which he then had free access.

Bunyan's imprisonment was for preaching, and for praying without the Book of Common Prayer. In prison he had ample time at his disposal, and he had the Bible, the Concordance, and Foxe's "Book of Martyrs." He was allowed out of jail on parol, but he always faithfully went back. The Bishops heard of this liberty being granted, and sent down a special messenger to look into the matter. The messenger went to the jail, and found all the prisoners safe, including John Bunyan himself, and returned to town satisfied. Bunyan began his "Pilgrim's Progress" in prison, and died at sixty years of age, having written sixty-two books.

One can easily see how a man of that tumultuous disposition and defective early training had personally to encounter a very real Apollyon in the pursuit

of a Christian life, surrounded, as he was, with so many temptations. His familiarity with the Bible and two or three Puritan works will show us how he came to possess that marvellously clear and attractive style that has enabled him to make so deep and lasting an impression on hundreds of thousands in every land, and has extorted the admiration, in the present day, of even those who boast that they have got, theologically, far beyond his views and opinions on most matters. His case proves to us that it is not impossible to influence our fellow-men for their good without our having any University or other special training. Bunyan's own heart and his fellow-men had been his study ; the Bible provided remedies for the evils which he found within and around him and them, and his earnestness gave force and effect to all his teachings, which were based on his practical study of human nature and the Book of God.

But we feel how impossible it is to do anything like justice to such a man in a mere passing reference such as this. We must pass on to the next person. Edward Baines had better chances, but at the Preston Free Grammar School he seems to have gained a reputation rather for rebellion against the Dominie than for any promise of future greatness. At sixteen he was apprenticed to a printer, and before his time expired he was allowed to seek to improve his position. He finished his time in the office of the "Leeds Mercury," of which he

ultimately became editor, and was for many years proprietor. He rose by rigid economy, strict temperance and unflagging industry. He, too, was fortunate in the choice of a wife. He was most assiduous in the cultivation of his mind; and, when he became editor, he is described as having "thrown himself into the controversies of that day, as if he had done nothing else all his life." How he passed through half a century of public life, and gained the respect and esteem of all sorts and conditions of men, is a page of history so recent that it needs no repetition here.

Hugh Miller commenced his career at sea, and a hard time he seems to have had of it. A dame's school had taught him the "Shorter Catechism" and portions of the Scriptures. The Biblical narratives and the heroic legends of his native land seem to have aroused his enthusiasm. His wanderings as a sailor, and the sympathetic teachings of an uncle, inspired him with a love of natural history. He was sent to the Grammar School at Cromarty; but, partly because he was a bad boy, and partly owing to glaring defects in the school arrangements, he did very little there. At seventeen he became a mason. At first he was considered "eccentric and stupid," but afterwards gave signs of marked ability; and, when he went to a job near Edinburgh, he gave such satisfaction to the foreman, that, to the great jealousy of the other workmen, he paid the young Highlander the same rate of wages as he

paid to them. They disliked the intruder, and more especially because he would not drink with them, or treat them ; and they ridiculed his religious opinions. He made friends of some who admired his abilities, and was next appointed accountant in a bank. He soon mastered the intricacies of that position. He afterwards became editor of the "Witness," and popular as a lecturer on geological questions, to which he earnestly and intelligently devoted his attention. He was, in fact, as remarkable for his mastery of the party-politics of different sections of the church of his native land as for his intimate acquaintance with geological science. His eminence as a geologist was undisputed ; but at the highest point of his popularity he never once forgot to bear in mind that he had begun at the quarry. He was a striking example of what will-power can accomplish out of very unlikely material, and under very unfavorable surroundings.

John Kitto is the next, and his body was feeble and deformed. In early life he was under the care of his grandmother. His father was a drunkard, so that he got no schooling worth mentioning. But a shoemaker filled his mind with the romantic history of Jack the Giant Killer, and other stories of that kind. Afterwards he read "Pilgrim's Progress," "Gulliver's Travels," and the poems of Young and Spenser. At the age of twelve he carried a load of slate up a ladder to the roof of a house, when he

fell, and was picked up apparently dead. He was not dead, but was deaf for the remainder of his life. He was taught shoemaking in the workhouse. His first stimulant in the upward career he gained when he found that he was no longer a workhouse boy, but an apprentice. He wrote some essays in a Plymouth paper, which secured him the appointment as sub-librarian at the public library of that place. We can imagine what such a young man, with his tremendous energy and perseverance, would do with plenty of time and free access to a public library. A Bible-Christian dentist taught him that business, and also directed his thoughts into religious channels. Finding that the Church Missionary Society required printers in connection with one of their missions, this good man offered £50 a year for two years to defray the costs of a short course at the Islington Missionary College, and this was accepted, and Kitto went there. He was sent to Malta, and as he tells us in that remarkable work "The Lost Senses," his indisposition to speak because he could not hear had gradually almost deprived him of the power of speaking. But the captain and crew, on his voyage to Malta, conspired to make him speak, and before the end of the voyage, he had almost abandoned the habit of taking his pencil to ask or answer any question. A German University conferred on him the degree of D. D., though he was a layman, and in 1850 he was granted £100 a year from the Civil List by Lord John Russell. He

married and had a family, and £1,800 was raised by his admirers to secure him a year's rest. His connection with the "Penny Cyclopædia," the "Biblical Cyclopædia," the "Pictorial Bible," and many other valuable works, will be recollected by many who are still living. He made for himself a very high and prominent position by his dogged perseverance in the cultivation of his mind, and by storing it with those rich and varied materials he knew so well how to employ when at length he had the chance of doing so. But what poverty, what bitter and repeated disappointment, scorn, ridicule, opposition, and injustice were added to the physical disabilities against which he had to contend ! Yet he overcame them all. His dogged perseverance carried him over every obstacle, as it will every man who properly cultivates his will-power. Not that he may always be able to conquer in every contest. He may be beaten now and then, but, in the long run, he will come off victorious, — a striking contrast to the other man who has neglected his will-power, and allowed himself to drift along, making only feeble, spasmodic, and occasional attempts to direct his own course.

It will be observed that these men were happy in the discharge of what they deemed their duty in making progress. As Doctor Mortimer Granville has told us, "we were not sent into this world to be miserable, nor was life given us to be wasted in melancholy regrets for its emptiness, its wants, and

its weakness. We should make the best of what is given us, not pile up agony of regret for our disappointments."

Yet some people, who boast of their culture and enlightenment, think that the Almighty would have done better to have made an altogether sinless creature, instead of giving him a free will, and letting him train himself in and for life's battle. But it is difficult to conceive of an Omnipotent Being who does not do the very best thing that could be done. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" A man asked me one day what would be my state of mind towards the Deity if it could be proved to me, beyond the possibility of doubt, that we are descended from the monkeys? "Simply," I replied, "that God thought this the best way of producing man;" and I should still regret that so many men had not descended, or ascended, whichever it may be, further from their hirsute progenitors, than at present appears to be the case. If we look around us we see, on every hand, the practical advantages of the conflict in which we are engaged. We see the drawbacks attendant on the position of those who are released from these labors, and have nothing to do but "to kill time." In proportion as they neglect the duties of their position, they are not in the enjoyment of so much happiness as the tiller of the soil, or the cobbler at his last. "Ah! let the cobbler stick to his last," says one man; but had this absurd motto been the

guiding rule of Carey and of Morison, what would be the present state of Chinese Missions? We are directed to be "content with the station in life to which it has pleased God to call us;" but the station to which God really "calls" us, is one as high as we can climb. All nature urges us onward and upward, and whether it is Paderewski practising several hours a day, in spite of the marvellous proficiency that he has already attained, or the poor servant-girl saving up her pence, as one recently did in the north of England week by week for years, out of her very scanty earnings, till she had repaid the Poor Law Guardians of her native parish the money she found had been advanced by them in out-door relief to her father in her absence, the principle is just the same; a noble object, and steady, untiring, intelligent perseverance, till that object has been accomplished. Our sympathies are therefore wholly with the "poor creature," as he has been called. We admire the human being with a backbone, and we pity the invertebrate creatures who apparently do not even attempt to direct their course in life, and affect to look down with contempt on those who do. Would that some masterly pen or voice would take this matter up, and make the nation ring from one end to the other with an overpowering appeal to men to stand manfully and fight the fight that is imposed upon them, with cultivated intelligence, persistent perseverance, and habitual self-denial !

I have frequently noticed that some of these "self-made men" develop features that are unlovely, and thus diminish the lustre of a long life of self-sacrifice, and seem to counterbalance some of the finer points which their example would otherwise present attractively for our imitation. They are sometimes impatient of the failure of others to reach the position of independence which they themselves have been able to attain; they are apt to be a little hypercritical in such cases, obstinate in respect to things in general, and intolerant towards those who may differ from them on any points with respect to which they have once made up their minds.

But this is easily accounted for. It is not a very simple matter to persuade a man who has made his position in life that any other person knows better, on certain points, than he does, what is right and what is wrong, what is politic and what is impolitic. The fact that he has been so successful seems to prove to him that his way must be right; and this fact has been very constantly and very forcibly impressed upon him as he has passed along through the struggles of life. He has held to his own opinions, and has thereby accomplished the object which he set before him, while those who have pursued an opposite course have failed.

The conviction, therefore, that he must be right and that they must be wrong has sunk down into his mind, and spread its roots there so deep and

wide, that the idea has become almost ineradicable. Want of mental culture prevents him from making a just application in some cases, even of his own experience, and leads him quite wrong in the direction we have indicated. But it would be a very ungracious task to go into details on such a point. Professor Blackie has not much patience with this sort of man, and in his little work on *Self-Culture*, he falls foul of him in this manner: "A man who knows merely with a keen glance, and acts with a firm hand, may do very well for the rough work of the world." Is not that just what is most wanted? "But he may be a very ungracious and unlovely creature withal, angular, square, dogmatical, persistent, pertinacious, blushless, and perhaps bumptious." Yes, he may be all that, and often is; but still he is as useful as a professor in his day and generation, for his example of the value of steady perseverance, self-denial, and the other virtues which lie at the basis of success of any kind, in anything, is worth following as to most of his points at any rate; and, therefore, the "blushlessness" and "bumptiousness" of which the Professor accuses him may be forgiven.

Professor Blackie comments on him further: "To bevel down the corners of a character so constituted by a little æsthetical culture were a work of no small benefit to society, and a source of considerable comfort to the creature himself." But it would be more for the benefit of society that,

before subjecting "the creature himself" to the "bevelling" process, men should be taught to imitate his best points, his patience, intelligence, perseverance, and self-denial. "Bevel down" and polish up by all means; but we should like to hear "the creature himself" on what "wants doing" to the Professor, and such as he. Food comes before the fine arts, and if you cannot conveniently have culture "rigged up alongside," it must be allowed to fall astern. That the ungracious and unlovely "creature himself" would be all the more agreeable to his fellows for a little more refinement, no one wishes to deny; and, perhaps, in most cases he would be all the happier himself for it. But his "refined" neighbors are generally very forgiving for any shortcomings in this direction, and are content to take him as they find him, so long as he is "well off," and hospitable; and after all, technical instruction has a right to precede any merely ornamental work. A man may be pardoned for having given a decided preference to studies which facilitated his upward progress in life, though we will admit that he should have been careful not to let these things so entirely absorb his attention that he can think and talk of nothing but "shop." Still he may be pardoned for giving them the first place.

Again, anything merely æsthetic ought not for a moment to interfere with the careful cultivation of our physical well being. Fresh air, plain wholesome food, moderation in all things, and exercise

every day of your life, if at all possible, are of more practical importance than any amount of æsthetical cultivation. If you cannot find time to do both, take the exercise and let the æsthetics go ! If you cannot find time to take exercise, you will sooner or later be compelled to find time to be ill. First, at any rate, develop your muscles rather than your æsthetic tastes. Cricket, golf, football and cycling are far more important than any merely mental studies ; for unless you secure a sound mind in a sound body, none of your other efforts to succeed will meet with their full reward. Surely the idea that our "daily bread" is the first thing to be considered, with a due "thought for the morrow" as well, ought not to want any enforcing in a land like this, which, as Sydney Smith says, is the "only country in which poverty is a *crime* !"

The beau-ideal of a man is that combination which we have spoken of, in which the useful and the ornamental are united with relative prominence according to the practical value he attaches to each, in which the ornamental shall not be neglected, but duly subordinated to the practical, in which the man builds his house first, and decorates it afterwards, while he pursues his upward career. But this is another of the numerous questions arising out of our subject, which can only be touched upon, though it is so important that it deserves a whole volume to itself.

CHAPTER XIV.

PRACTICAL CONCLUSION.

ALL through this book I have pointed out that the whole thing rests upon the *individual himself*. He must rely upon *himself*, and not trust to any one to do the work for him, to luck or legacies, gifts or grants, charities or chances, but rely alone upon his own sturdy, cultivated will and strong arm. John Stuart Mill said: "Even despotism does not produce its worst effects so long as individuality exists under it; and whatever crushes individuality *is* despotism, by whatever name it may be called."

Of course there are exceptions to the rule thus laid down; for one man has his necessity for thrift partially obliterated by a fond parent who leaves him enough to "keep the wolf from the door," if not to provide the means of comfortable subsistence. In other cases the need for solicitude on these material matters is entirely taken away by the adequacy of the provision made. Where the provision is fully adequate nothing more need be said, except to inculcate the duty of "him that hath" bearing in mind the necessities of his less fortunate fellow-creatures, and guarding his store from extinction, or even diminution, by imprudent

measures. Even where the provision is only small, it may be supplemented with less personal effort than he requires who has received no such help ; and it may be made the agency for increasing the rate of progress upwards. Sometimes we notice that it operates in the opposite direction. I knew a case in which a fond father labored, in advancing years and amidst many difficulties, to do something of this description. At last he rushed into my room one day, and announced that his task was that day completed. He seemed to feel that he had accomplished one of the chief obligations of his position. He had completed an investment which would secure to his son £100 a year for life. He expected me to join him in his exuberant rejoicing. But I could not, for I saw that, however important an aid it might have proved to many men, it was just enough to deprive such a man as his son was of that stimulus to exertion without which few men ever make a position for themselves of any importance. The son was a man who might probably have risen to a position of eminence, who could be lavish when cash was plentiful, but on £100 a year, as a confirmed bachelor, he could live, or, at any rate, exist. I am speaking of thirty years ago. He had just entered on one of the learned professions. His abilities were very superior, and his chances remarkably good till this fatal annuity. After that, he still earned odd guineas on the press, and other small sums in his profession ; but

in the £100 a year he had what he called "bread and cheese," and that fact paralyzed all his efforts, and destroyed that ambition to make a position which had previously been conspicuous, and was operating with every prospect of a large measure of success. Thirty years have passed away. He has never attained any kind of eminence either in his profession, or on the press, and as to his income from it, he has probably never trebled the £100 a year, and I should not be far out were I to venture to assert that he has not often doubled it.

It is obvious that such a man is not a healthy member of the community. The work done *for* him instead of *by* him, checks, his industry, deadens his ambition, and prevents society from reaping the advantage of the exertions he would otherwise have made, and the example he would, but for that annuity, have set. This reminds one of what Lord Melbourne wrote to Lord John Russell, who had asked him to do something for the sons of the poet, Tom Moore: "Making a small provision for young men is hardly justifiable, and it is of all things the most prejudicial to the young men themselves. They think what they have a much larger income than it really is, and they make no exertion. The young should never have any language but this: you have *your own way to make*, and it depends upon *your own exertions* whether you starve or not."

A man who does not succeed in life has a hundred ways of accounting for his failure; but he is in

most cases himself to blame. An eminent judge declared that some succeeded by talents, some by connections, but the majority by "commencing without a shilling." Thousands of fortunes have been made by men who commenced in the humblest positions without money, but with will-power, by means of which they climbed to fame and fortune. One man excuses himself by urging that if he had been better educated, if he had been born somewhere else, if he had been in some different occupation, he would have succeeded. But Dr. Johnson (who himself came to London so poor that he often went without a dinner) declared that it was "generally a man's own fault that he failed to succeed. Indolent and irresolute men have always plenty of excuses, but the real cause of failure is generally want of industry, system, punctuality, and perseverance ; and they ignore the 'importance of little things.' " Many men can see plainly enough how stupid it is of some *other* man to waste his time and money and exhibit so little energy in his attempt to get on ; but they do not perceive that their own case is equally bad, and sometimes worse than that of the man they so freely condemn. People who are content to live from hand to mouth, year after year, are a discredit to themselves and their families, and an embarrassment to all their friends who desire that they should make progress. Cobden used to divide society into two classes, those who saved, and those who spent, and he remarked that while the savers built the ships and

bridges and mills, the other class had always been their slaves. John Bright told the working men of his day that there was "no royal road to improve their position, which could only be done by industry, frugality, temperance and honesty." Lord Bacon said it was "better to look after petty savings than to descend to petty gettings." The same idea is found in the motto "Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves." If people had the manliness not to ape the style of living of classes better off than they are, a great deal of sorrow, suffering and shabby gentility would be avoided. Hugh Miller, when asked why he refused drink, said: "Sir, I can abstain, but I can't be 'moderate.'" There are tens of thousands in the same case, hugging the bondage of the drink which is as a millstone round their necks, an effective barrier in the uphill path to promotion and prosperity; but they feel sure *they*, at least, always can be "moderate," though so many others may fail to keep within due bounds.

Such are some of the leading points for serious consideration. I have but very briefly dealt with this great question, and have a painful consciousness of my shortcomings; but if I have said my say in such a way as to start even a few on the uphill path of self-conquest, I shall feel abundantly rewarded for any labor it has caused me, and gratified that I pursued the idea from its first simple statement to even that imperfect stage of development which it has reached in this book.

I have pointed out, I fear very inadequately, what is to be done by those who really want to attain success, and who are not sufficiently invertebrate to render it improbable that they ever will reach the point they aim at. But (1) When ? (2) Where ? (3) By whom ? and (4) How, is all this to be done ?

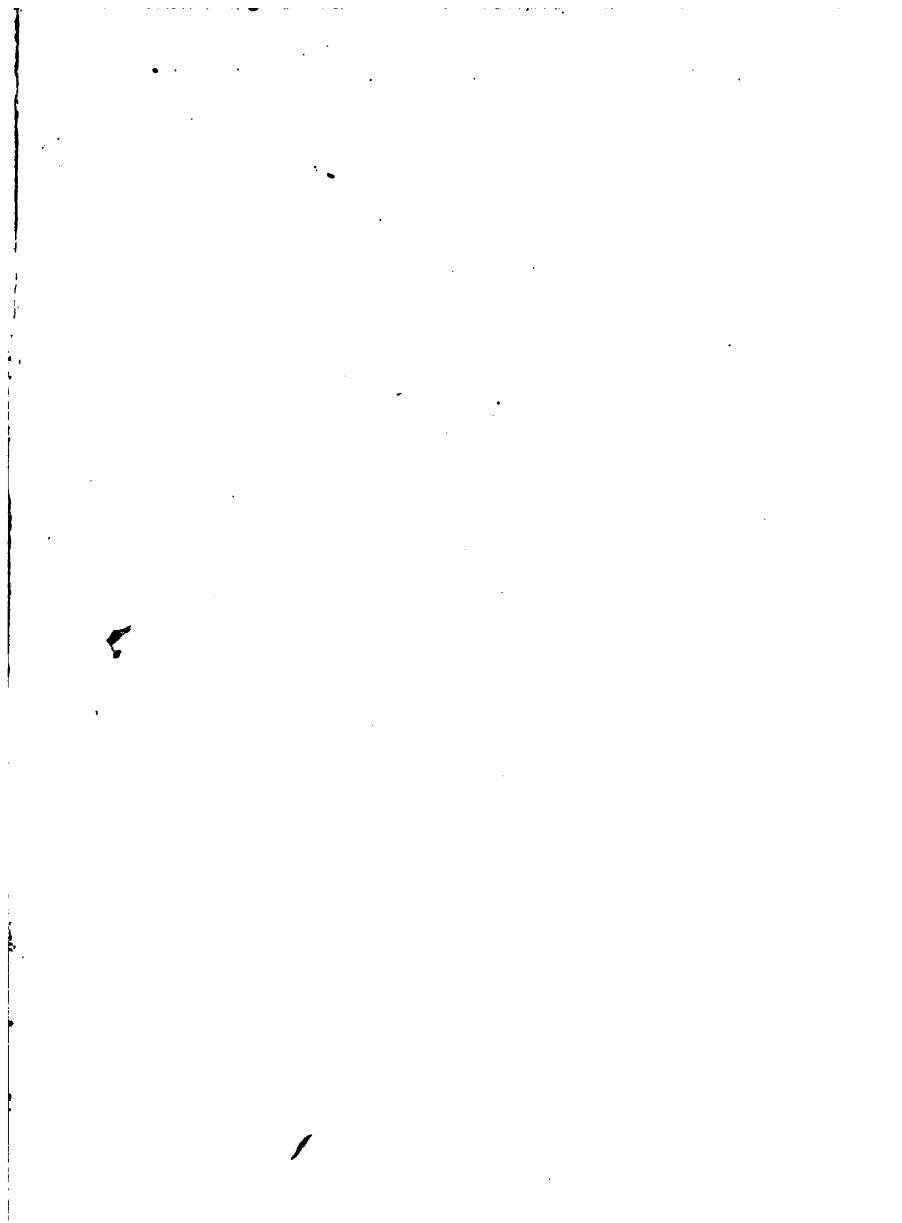
When ? — Now is the time to do anything that is worth doing, that it is your duty or to your advantage to perform ; to-morrow may be, *for you*, forever too late.

Where ? — Here !

By whom ? — “Thou art the man !”


How ? — By the careful cultivation and the persistent exercise of the will-power, as I have described, to the best of my ability, leaving each reader to apply practically the suggestions to the ever-varying details of his own particular case. This is the great and fundamental “secret of success,” moral or social, religious or political, commercial or professional. The more you reflect upon it the clearer it will become to you, and the more you act upon it the stronger you will become in the fight, and the nearer you will get to the object of your ambition, whatever that object may happen to be.

THE END.



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